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CADGER CON.



The burglar seized a heavy weight that was lying on the counter, and flung it at the grocer's head. The heavy metal struck the man on the forehead, and sent him reeling across the shop.

CADGER CON.

CHAPTER I.

A "BLACK EYE" ON CHRISTMAS NIGHT—THE COUNTRY COUSIN PUTS HER FOOT IN IT—A FATHER'S RAGE—HOW DICK GOT THE BEAUTY SPOT—THE FIGHT BY THE HOSPITAL WALL.

It was merry Christmas night in the great city of London, and rich and poor were striving to be happy, while enjoying the good things spread before them.

Many gay lads and winsome lasses exchanged kisses under mistletoe boughs that evening, and festive and joyous looked the holly and ivy that hung on the walls.

Within the sound of the old Bow Bells that night there was not a happier or more contented household than that of Thomas Bacon, a well-to-do grocer, who lived in the upper part of the house.

Certainly there was not, as a general thing, in all Great Britain a more light-hearted lad than his son Dick.

Yet on this very night there was a slight cloud over him, and, slight as the occasion for his annoyance may seem, it was a something that he could not remove.

To speak the plain truth, Dick Bacon had a "rousing black eye."

At any other time, this slight ornament would not have troubled Dick much; but to-night his sweet country cousin, Jane Williams, was to spend the last hours in his father's house, as on the morrow she would leave them to join her relatives in America.

Yes, Jane Williams was a sweet creature, and Dick was sweet on her.

Therefore, it annoyed him very much that on this particular night, he should appear to her with the mark of a blackguard on his honest and comely countenance.

Dick's mother and sister had noticed the unusual adornment around his eye, and various were the appliances prescribed on the previous evening in order to bring his face back to its usual appearance.

Several pounds of beefsteak and any number of oysters had been applied, but all in vain.

The old grocer, who was very near-sighted, had not yet noticed Dick's ornament, but it was destined that he was not to remain in ignorance of the fact much longer.

The hour for dinner draws near, and the country cousin is looked for anxiously.

At length a cab comes rattling through the silent street, the door-bell rings, and a merry voice is heard in the hall below.

The next moment a blooming young girl springs into the grocer's parlor, and slings her kisses around at a rate that would make a hermit's mouth water.

Dick does not get his share of the kisses, for he lingers in the dark corner of the room, very much like a pouting child.

"Why, Cousin Dick," cried the merry Jane, as she looked upbraidingly at the lad, "what have I done to you? Are you angry with me? Is this the way you receive your cousin, and it her last night in the old home?"

Dick did not reply to these questions in words; but his actions were quite emphatic.

Drawing a handkerchief from his pocket, he clapped it to his disfigured eye, sprang out under the mistletoe, put his arm around Jane's waist, and gave her a hearty kiss.

"You saucy fellow," cried the merry girl. "I've a good mind to box your ears. What impertinence! 'Tis no wonder you're ashamed to show your face. But, dear me, what's the matter with your eye? Is it sore? Why do you hold your handkerchief to it in that way?"

"'Tis a little sore—hurt a trifle," faltered Dick, as he attempted to sneak back to his dark corner.

But "murder will out" sooner or later, and fathers will discover the marks of battle on their valiant sons.

"A little sore," cried the roguish girl, as she sprang forward and seized the handkerchief. "I should say it was a little sore. Why, Dick, you wicked lad, you've been fighting again. Dear me, what a terrible black eye you've got. How did you get it?"

"I—I—I—" stammered Dick.

"What's that I hear?" cried his father; "Dick's got another black eye? Fighting again, you young scamp? Didn't I warn you against making a blackguard of yourself? Goodness gracious, what will become of you? The next thing we'll read in the sporting papers will be the announcement that Dick Bacon, the Grocer's Pet, is matched to fight the Game Chicken of Westminster, twenty pounds aside. What do you mean by it, sirrah?"

"I couldn't help it, sir," pleaded the lad. "I—I—didn't want to wrangle—and at Christmas, too."

"Oh, Dick," muttered the young visitor, as she laid her hand on the lad's shoulder, and cast an appealing glance at the angry parent. "I'm so sorry that I spoke of it. I didn't intend to get you into trouble—Christmas time and all. Do forgive him, sir."

"Certainly—certainly, Jane," returned the old grocer. "I don't want anything ugly to occur to-night. No cross words on Christmas night. I'll forgive you, Dick. But tell us how you got that mouse over your eye? Who gave it to you? Did you pay him back in the same coin? Come, tell us all about it, while dinner is being placed on the table."

'Tis a very remarkable fact that very few fathers, no matter how much they may preach to their sons about the sin of fighting, ever like to hear that their own flesh and blood has come out "second best," in a fair, hard-fought encounter.

Old Thomas Bacon had been a wild youth in his day, and many a time and oft had he toed the mark with some of the best boxers in his native city.

The old grocer was a devout member of the church now, and the head of a respectable family, so it became him to lecture and upbraid his son on the evil and ungentlemanly practice of boxing; yet the old veteran still delighted in reading and hearing of, battles, much as he derided the participants.

Therefore it was that he was now more anxious to learn the particulars of Dick's last encounter than to tackle the great English Christmas feast of turkey, roast-beef and plum pudding.

It was evident that Dick did not care to speak about the unpleasant affair at all.

Could it be that he had received a beating from some lad who was not as big as himself?

Was it because he dreaded his father's displeasure, and feared his rebukes on this merry Christmas night?

Did he feel ashamed before his beautiful cousin for being engaged in a brawl?

Or was it because he did not care to speak of his own prowess in the encounter?

Whatever the cause may have been, he held down his head, fumbled with the buttons on his jacket, and remained silent, while all eyes in the room were bent earnestly on him.

"Come, sirrah," cried his father, with gathering anger, "I want you to tell me all about this late encounter of yours. Why don't you speak out? Where did you get that black eye? Who were you fighting with?"

"Thomas—Thomas," pleaded the grocer's wife. "Don't be making a disagreeable scene, and on this night, too. Dick will tell you all about it in the morning. I can tell you that he was not to blame."

"But I insist on having it to-night," returned the angry man, "and I'll hear it this instant, or he shan't have dinner with us. What! my own son disobey me in my own house, and on Christmas night, too. Hang it, woman, I'm not a going to be bearded in my own den, and by a young cub like that. If he doesn't tell me all about the fight, hang me if I don't give him another black eye."

As the angry man spoke he placed himself in a fighting attitude, and advanced on his son.

"Dear me, Thomas," shouted the mother, as she sprang to save her son, "what is getting into you at all. You wouldn't beat poor Dick on a Christmas night—and it is his birth-night at that! Shame—shame, Thomas. The poor lad is

keeping silent only because he doesn't wish to give you pain on such an occasion."

"Shame fiddlesticks!" cried the excited man. "I'd have you to know, Mrs. Bacon, that I won't tolerate stubbornness in my son on Christmas night or any other night. He must obey his father, or he'll leave my house. I'll kick him down stairs, and into the street, if he doesn't tell me the truth at once about this last quarrel. Do you hear me, sir?"

As the father spoke, he stood before his son with clenched hands and angry brow.

Dick met the angry glance without quailing; but there was no look of defiance or bravado on his face.

On the contrary, there was an expression of deep humility and pain on the manly face of the lad, as he replied to the angry menace.

"Don't be angry with me, father, I did not mean to be disobedient or stubborn. I did not want to tell you about the quarrel, because—"

Dick hesitated, and it was evident that he was at a loss for words to express himself.

"Because what, sir?" said the angry man, somewhat mollified by the lad's humble tone and words. "What are you afraid of? Speak out, I say."

"Because," continued the lad, "I did not want to give you any annoyance on such a happy night as this promised to be. I did not like to tell you how I got the black eye, because I knew that it would be sure to give you trouble. But now, as you insist on it, I will tell you how it happened."

"Go on, then, and don't be making such a mountain out of a little mouse. As you speak so mysteriously I am more anxious than ever to hear about it. I suppose you have another Guy Fawkes' plot, or something of the kind. Go on, sir. Let's hear the wondrous story. There's no danger that it will take away my appetite for dinner."

As the grocer spoke, he resumed his seat by the fire, and watched his son.

Thomas Bacon was a good husband and a kind father, but he was a little hasty.

It is said that most kind-hearted people learn that way.

"Well, sir," resumed Dick, as he advanced towards his father, while, at the same time, he cast an expressive glance around the room, "there's not a great deal to tell, after all. Only it annoyed me very much; and I'm afraid it will annoy you, also. There's no great plot about it, either."

"Go on, sir," interrupted the father. "Dinner will soon be ready. You have scarcely ten minutes for your thrilling narrative, and you will have to cut the rounds short."

"Last night, sir," continued Dick, "when I was minding the things outside the shop, I saw two chaps poking around that I knew were up to no good—for they're as bad ones as you'll find in the Seven Dials."

"How did you know that?" interrupted his father. "Are you acquainted with these gentry? Oh, I suppose you met them at some of those entertainments—boxing-matches—that you attend? Some of the fancy, eh?"

"Well, sir," returned Dick, as he held down his head, "I suppose it is best to confess that they were pointed out to me as young thieves at the last benefit I looked in at. I never spoke to them, though, until last night."

"Go on, sir," commanded the father. "Let us hear the rest of your story. But let us hear, also, by what names these worthies are known."

"They are called Sleepy Sam and Cadger Con," replied the lad, "and they always go around together."

"A nice pair, I've no doubt," remarked the father with a sneer, "and so they allow thieves to enter boxing halls now-a-days? Why, sir, in my young days, none but honest lads and gentlemen entered such places. What is the country coming to? And you, sir; you! are you not ashamed to associate with such vile rascals? But, go on—go on. I suppose we'll see Cadger Con down in the shop some day inquiring for his friend, Dick the Dasher. Go on."

"Well, sir, when I saw them lounging about

the shop, I knew that they were up to cribbing something, and I watched them as well as I could, while waiting on the folks.

"When they thought my back was turned, one of them—Cadger Con—slipped a box of figs under his coat, and the other grabbed a box of candies, and away they went.

"I shot after them as fast as I could, without saying a word, for the shop was full, and I didn't want to raise a fuss—thinking that I was able to manage them myself, without any help.

"Well—well," interrupted the grocer, "you did give the young scamps a drubbing, Dick, eh?"

"I caught up to Sleepy Sam at first, sir," continued Dick, "down by the hospital wall. I collared him, gave him a trip, and down he went. I may have given him a box across the face at the same time, but I don't remember now.

"I only waited to take the candies away from Sleepy Sam, and then I made for the other scamp; but I had not far to run, for when his chum called for help, he turned about and faced me.

"Dropping the candies, I squared for him; and I tell you, father, he's no baby, that Cadger Con, for he did give me one or two good ones before I floored him."

"But you did floor him, Dick?" cried the old grocer, as he clapped his hands with joy. "You've got the old pluck in you, Dick. You beat the pair of them, eh, my lad?"

"I managed to get a left hander in on Cadger, sir, that sent him to grass, just as Sleepy Sam came on me again full bang, and swearing he'd knock me into the middle of next week."

"But he didn't, Dick; did he?" inquired the father, while the country cousin listened eagerly for the reply.

"He didn't," replied Dick, with a smile. "But I won't be a minute telling you about it."

"I turned to face Sleepy Sam: and we were at it hot and heavy, when Cadger Con got behind me and gave me a crack on the side of the head."

"That was foul," cried the old grocer. "Was there no one near to show you fair play?"

"'Twas down in that lonesome spot by the hospital wall," replied the lad. "There wasn't a soul near; and to tell the truth, I began to feel that I had got into a bad box; but I was in for the fight, and I had to do the best I could, for I knew that I had to deal with two bad customers."

"When I found that the two of them were at me at the same time, I sprang to the wall, and placed my back against it, and let fly at them as fast as I could.

"I think I could have given them both a good fight for some time, as I knocked Cadger Con down again, and Sleepy Sam was getting weak, when I felt something strike me a hard knock in the eye, and down I went.

"Cadger Con had picked up a stone, and let fly at my head; and that's what gave me the black eye, sir."

"The cowardly scamp—the young thief!" cried the old grocer. "Why, Dick, 'tis a wonder they didn't kill you! What did you do then? Did they kick you when they got you down, my brave fellow?"

"That's what I was afraid of, sir," returned he boy; "and I thought it was time to call out for help. So I cried out as loud as I could, and all the time they were pegging away at me as hard as they could. They'd have beat my face into a jelly, only I kept it covered with my hands, for I didn't want to have a pair of black eyes, and at Christmas time, too."

"Poor Dick!" said the country cousin. "What a cruel shame it was to abuse you so."

"Well, Dick," cried the father, growing more and more excited; "what happened then? Didn't you manage to get on your feet again and floor the rascals? Oh, I wish I had been there!"

"They didn't pound me long, sir," replied the lad, "when a policeman came up and grabbed them both."

"Did he lock them up, Dick?" inquired the father, as his eyes flashed with indignation.

"He did, sir," was the reply; "and I had to make a charge against them, too."

"That was right, Dick," exclaimed the father; "and, on my honor, but I'll prosecute the wretches to the furthest extent of the law. The audacious scoundrels! They deserve to be transported. The young villains! I'll make them suffer for this outrage!"

"But, sir," interposed Dick.

"But what, sir?" cried the father.

"But they escaped this morning, sir."

"Escaped!" exclaimed the excited man.

"Then we'll have them arrested again; and they will be severely punished, if there's any law in the land."

"But, sir," again interposed the son, "I think it would be just as well to let them alone."

"What do you mean by that, sirrah?" demanded the indignant man, as he glared at his son. "Just as well to let rascals like that go unpunished? Why, you must be going out of your mind!"

Dick did not reply for a few moments, but looked at his mother and sister, while an uneasy expression was on his manly face.

It was evident that the lad was holding back something that he knew would cause his father much pain; that he did not like to annoy him any more on that happy Christmas night.

The father noticed the lad's hesitation; and his curiosity became more and more aroused.

He was determined to find out all about his son's adventure, as well as ascertain the reason why he desired to let the culprits go unpunished.

"Dick," he cried, in a stern voice, "you are keeping back something from me. Now I command you to tell me the whole truth in this affair. Why do you wish to let these rascals go unpunished?"

The lad saw it was useless to attempt further concealment, and he replied:

"Because, father," was the reply, "I did not like to give you pain, if I could help it. But now I will have to tell you, as you insist on it."

"Tell me what, sir? go on!"

"One of the lads that I fought with last night, Cadger Con he's called, is my cousin Cornelius, Uncle Richard's son that used to live here with us."

The old grocer uttered an exclamation of surprise and pain, as he turned his head away, and held his handkerchief to his eyes.

"Father—father," cried the lad. "I'm sorry—so sorry that I told you anything about it. I knew it would trouble you; and that's the reason I didn't want to mention the fight at all if I could help it."

The old grocer grasped his son's hand, as he exclaimed:

"I understand it all now, Dick. You're a noble fellow, and I was to blame for speaking to you so harshly. Oh, dear, it's too bad! And his father—my dear brother Richard—expected back to England this very day. But I couldn't help him—he was always vicious—I could make no hand of him."

CHAPTER II.

THE TWIN BROTHERS AND THE RASCALLY NEPHEW—THE WILD CRY OF "MURDER—MURDER! HELP!"—THE STRUGGLE DOWN STAIRS—THE DEVOTED SON—WHAT THE COUNTRY COUSIN SAW IN THE SHOP.

THOMAS BACON, the old grocer, and his brother Richard were twins; and so much did they resemble each other in appearance, that their most intimate friends could not recognize one from the other.

They grew up together in boyhood as loving as brothers could be, and in manhood they clung to each other in joy and in sorrow.

Years passed away, and Thomas Bacon prospered in his worldly affairs, while his domestic life was brightened by the presence of a good wife and two handsome children.

Richard, on the other hand, was unfortunate in business, while his domestic life was embittered by a wife who made his home a continual scene of strife and bickering.

At length the unfortunate man, after a hopeless struggle, became a penniless bankrupt; and then, to add to his misery, his wife deserted him, taking with her his daughter, an infant scarce able to lisp.

Completely disgusted and disheartened, Richard Bacon bade adieu to the land of his birth and misfortunes, and sought to better his fortunes in the wilds of Australia, leaving his only son in the care of his brother, the grocer.

The little boy was received into his uncle's house with open arms, the grocer and his wife treating him with as much care and kindness as they bestowed on their own handsome and winning children.

But kindness and care were lavished in vain on this wayward and vicious boy.

From the hour he entered his uncle's house, until the night that he left it in disgrace, he was a source of worry and pain to the grocer and his good wife.

He quarreled with his cousins and the children of the neighborhood; he stole whatever he could lay his hands on; and he was expelled from every

school that he was sent to; while it required all his uncle's influence and entreaties to keep him from being sent to prison by the authorities.

Thomas Bacon bore with the nephew for years, as he loved the brother who was away seeking his fortune in Australia; and he hoped that time and forbearance would improve the vicious son.

"When Richard comes back to England again," the grocer would say, "it would break his heart to find that his son had turned out bad. I must do all I can to make an honest lad of him, for Richard's sake. But, dear me, I'm afraid 'tis a hopeless task. Though he's Richard's son, I can't help thinking he's born for the gallows."

Hoping against hope, the grocer and his wife continued to treat the young scamp with kindness and forbearance.

Growing from bad to worse, the nephew at length took French leave of his comfortable home, taking away with him all the money he could lay his hands on.

Even then the kind uncle did not take any measures to have him punished.

On the contrary, he strove, for some time after, to wean him away from the vile companions and thieves with whom he associated—and all for the love of that brother in the distant land.

But the efforts of the noble and generous man were thrown away on the graceless scamp; and the grocer was compelled to give up all hopes of reclaiming one who appeared to delight in rascality and crime.

For two years previous to the opening of our story, the name of the vicious nephew had not been spoken in the home of the old grocer, and is it any wonder that his son showed a reluctance in telling of his adventures on the previous night.

That rascally nephew was now known among the thieves and burglars of London by the expressive nickname of Cadger Con, and the grocer's son recognized him the moment he saw him sneaking around his father's shop.

Dick Bacon was also well aware that Cadger Con and his companion did not hang around the shop for the sole purpose of stealing a few boxes of figs and candies.

He felt that they had higher game in view; that his rascally cousin meditated another descent on his father's money drawer.

It may be easily imagined that the old grocer was much grieved on hearing of his nephew again and in such a way.

And yet Dick did not tell his father the whole story.

He did not tell him of the insolence of the young scamp when he was taken to the police office, nor of the fearful threats that were made against those who had befriended him in childhood.

Dick intended to have waited until the following day before mentioning the matter to his father, in order that the happiness of the day would not be broken; but his good intentions were frustrated by the thoughtless expressions of his country cousin.

The "murder was out" now, and there was no help for it but to put the best face possible on the affair.

Silence reigned for some time after Dick had told his adventure, and it was evident that a cloud was over all; but the cloud was soon dispelled.

It was a Merry Christmas Night, and a splendid dinner was ere long spread before the old grocer and his family—not forgetting the country cousin.

A splendid dinner and bright young faces have a wondrous effect in driving away the blues, and the old grocer was soon in excellent humor.

He consoled himself with the reflection that he had done all in his power to reclaim his nephew, and that he could look his absent brother in the face and say that he was not false to the love of early days.

That brother was now expected to arrive in England at any moment, and he was coming back to his native land with pockets full of gold, for he had been successful in Australia, successful beyond his fondest hopes.

As the grocer's family enjoyed the good things spread before them, little or no reference was made to the incident of the previous evening, though Thomas Bacon often spoke of the brother he expected to greet ere long.

He spoke of the remarkable likeness that existed between his brother and himself, and wondered if the sojourn in the wilds of Australia had changed his appearance much.

We would like to linger some time with that happy gathering, and listen to the old grocer as he related incidents of his early life, when his brother joined him in merry pranks.

It would be pleasant to hear the joyous songs that were sung by the young folks after dinner, and it would be most agreeable to listen to the stories that were told in order to cheer the country cousin before the leave-taking.

It would be delicious to linger over the joyous scenes of that eventful night, and to wish that they may last forever and forever.

But the longest day will have an end, and the dearest friends must part; yet it was little those happy people supposed that that happy night would have such a terrible ending, as it was decreed it should have.

The evening passed away as all such evenings will, and the hour for slumber came long before the young folks cared to retire.

"Early to bed and early to rise," was the old grocer's motto, and even on this festival night—the last night on which the country cousin was to be with them—he insisted on carrying it out to the letter.

As Dick was about to retire for the night, his father called him aside and said:

"Did you tell me, Dick, that those young rascals escaped from prison this morning?"

"Yes, sir," was the reply. "They broke out of the police office after midnight some time. So the sergeant told me, when I met him down the street early this morning, when I called down to see if they were all safe."

The old grocer's face wore a look of uneasiness as he muttered, in a low voice:

"Well—well, Dick, it doesn't matter. When your Uncle Richard comes home, it would be just as well not to mention anything about this row last night. Poor Dick, I wish we had better news for him."

Then the grocer dismissed his son for the night, and taking his pipe, he sat before the fire and ruminated.

All his family had retired for the night, and still the grocer sat before the fire, smoking his pipe, and thinking of the brother who was expected back every day.

Dick retired to his room, but not to sleep.

In the first place, he had to try a wash for his disfigured eye, and, as it was something that had been prescribed by one of his sporting friends, he hoped to escort his country cousin to the cars on the morrow, with all the marks of the recent encounter obliterated from his face.

Then the lad flung himself on his bed, but sleep did not come for some time.

His mind was over busy, and slumber would not come to his eyelids.

He thought of his country cousin, and wondered if he could ever look on the fair young face in days to come.

He thought of his rascally cousin, Cadger Con, and he fervently hoped that he would never cross his path again.

He pondered over the pleasant scenes of the night, and he felt that he was blessed in having a happy home, and kind, good parents.

He thought of his Australian uncle, and of the disappointment he would have to meet on realizing that his son was an outcast and a criminal.

Then Dick built castles in the air for some time; and at length slumber came over him.

But that sleep did not last long, and, oh, how rude was the awakening.

A wild cry of "murder—murder! help!" rang through the house on that Christmas night.

Dick was the first to awaken at the cry, and, seizing the candle that was still burning on the mantelpiece, he rushed out into the entry, without waiting to draw on his pantaloons.

In the meantime, the old grocer smoked away at his pipe until all the tobacco in the bowl was burned into ashes.

Rising from the chair, he took the candlestick from the table, muttering:

"I will go down to the shop before going to bed, and see if everything is secure there. That young rascal may take it into his head to pay us a visit. I will take the cash-box up to the bed-room, at any rate. It will be safer there than below. We cannot tell what may happen. That Con is a bad lad. Dear me, how troubled poor Dick will be when he comes back. All his gold won't bring him happiness—won't bring back his wife and daughter, or reclaim that scamp of a son. What a fortunate man I am, to be sure, on this Christmas night? I only wish poor Dick had half my good fortune in store for him."

Thus muttering to himself, the old grocer descended the stairs and entered the shop.

Casting a glance around, he saw that everything was in its place.

The old grocer laughed at his own fears, and muttered, as he approached the money drawer:

"I'm nothing but an old fool to imagine that

the scamp would come here to-night. He's bad enough, goodness knows; but he's not wretch enough for that. However, as I'm down here now, I might as well take the money up to the bed-room with me."

Still holding the candlestick in one hand, the old grocer pulled open the drawer.

An exclamation of surprise burst from him as he saw that the drawer was empty.

For a moment or two he stared around the store, and then he looked into the empty drawer once more.

"Can it be possible," he cried, "that I have been robbed? Or did my wife take the box upstairs? I must find out at once. I can't understand it."

The old grocer was moving toward the door, when a slight noise under the counter attracted his attention.

Turning around as quickly as possible, he saw a pair of legs sticking out between two barrels.

Without uttering a word, the brave old man laid his candlestick on the counter and seized the legs.

"Aha, you villain," he cried. "I've caught you, have I? Come out here, and let me see your rascally face. Ha—ha! that's your game, is it?"

As the old man spoke, he received a kick on the chest that sent him reeling against the shelves; and before he could grasp the legs again, two figures, with masks drawn over their faces, stood before him.

One glance at the burglars told the old grocer that they were mere lads, and, though each held in his hand a heavy bludgeon, he did not hesitate a moment in springing on them.

"You young rascals!" he cried, as he endeavored to close in on them. "I'll make you suffer for this night's work. You thought to rob me, and on Christmas night, too. I'll pound your heads together, and then hand you over to the police—you young wretches—you robbers!"

As the grocer spoke, he seized one of the burglars by the throat, and struck him in the face, despite the young villain's attempt to use his weapon.

The other burglar sprang over the counter, and struck at the old grocer with his bludgeon; but the blows fell on his companion as often as they did on the old grocer, as the latter dragged his prisoner to and fro while belaboring him.

"Pound his head with a weight, Sam," yelled the captive, as he was forced to drop his own weapon. "Smash his head or he'll choke me."

"Ah, you villain," exclaimed the old grocer, "I know your voice, and I know your rascally face, too."

As the man spoke, he seized the mask and flung it to the ground; while at the same time he attempted to drag his prisoner to the door.

"Kill 'im, Sam, kill 'im!" yelled the detected burglar, as he struggled fiercely with the enraged grocer.

Thus appealed to, the other burglar seized a heavy weight that was lying on the counter, and flung it at the old grocer's head.

The heavy metal struck the man on the forehead, and sent him reeling across the shop.

The brave old fellow was stunned for a moment, but he had not the slightest notion of giving up the fight.

The moment that the old grocer was forced to loosen his grasp on the young burglar's throat, the latter sprang back and seized the bludgeon that had fallen from him, while at the same time he picked up a tin box that had been lying under the counter.

The old grocer recovered from the blow in a few seconds, to be confronted once more by the young burglars.

As he met the vindictive glare of his rascally nephew, he saw that murder was in his eye; and for the first time during the encounter, the heart of the brave old man trembled within him.

It was then that he sent forth the thrilling cry of "murder—murder! Help!"

It was the fearful cry that startled his son Dick from his slumbers.

It was the last cry the good man ever uttered.

The sound of his voice had scarcely resounded through the silent house, when the ruthless murderers were on him with their bludgeons; and crash—crash went the heavy sticks against his head, as he was borne senseless and bleeding to the floor.

"Let's finish the old fool, and make tracks," cried the rascally nephew, as he stood over the fallen man, bludgeon in hand. "I hear some of the folks astir up stairs. Let's give him another crack, and then be off with the swag."

Again the bludgeons were raised, and down they went, crashing in the skull of the senseless man.

"Fiends! devils!" yelled a voice at the door, as the son of the murdered man rushed in the door, his face glowing with rage and excitement.

Dick recognized his villanous cousin at once, and, with a cry that resounded through the house, he sprang on him.

Again those murderous bludgeons were raised, and the next moment the devoted son was stretched senseless beside his dead father.

Hurried footsteps were now heard descending the stairs, accompanied by screams of terror and alarm.

Jane Williams, the country cousin, was the first to enter the shop; and the scene that met her startled gaze was never to be forgotten.

There lay her kind uncle, his face disfigured and covered with gore, and beside him was the senseless form of the son who had hurried to his rescue.

The young murderers had disappeared, taking with them the money-box.

What a fearful ending to that happy Christmas night.

CHAPTER III.

DICK STARTS OUT IN CHASE OF THE MURDERERS—THE BUXOM COUNTRY GIRLS ON THE CARS—HOW DICK SQUELCHES THEM—THE FIRE IN THE HOTEL—DICK'S DEADLY PERIL—HIS FATHER'S GHOST.

THREE days have passed away since that fatal Christmas night, and Dick Bacon has witnessed the burial of his kind father.

Three days of sorrow and anguish, and the cruel murderers are still at large.

They have been sought for in every nook and corner of the great city of London, all the police and detectives in Great Britain were on the lookout for them, and as yet no trace of the young scamps could be found.

Jane Williams, the country cousin, was forced to bid adieu to her bereaved relatives in the midst of their grief, as her passage had been engaged in a steamer that was to sail in a few days, and those huge mail vessels will not wait for prince or peasant.

Three days did Dick Bacon wait impatiently to hear some tidings from the police, concerning the murderers of his father; and who can portray the burning thoughts of vengeance that passed through his mind during that period.

On the morning of the fourth day, the excited boy broke in on his sorrow-stricken mother and sister with the exclamation:

"I can't stand this suspense any longer, mother. It will kill me. I must start out in search of those fiends. And I'll find them, too, though it should take me a lifetime, and even if I have to look for them in every part of the wide world."

"Dick—Dick!" cried the bereaved woman, "you cannot think of leaving us at such a time. What will we do without you? Oh, my dear boy, don't think of such a thing. Oh, don't leave us alone now."

"I can't rest, mother," returned the lad. "I must set off after those wretches. Uncle will be back from Australia, and he will look after the shop till I come back. Only, mother, don't tell him that it was his wicked son that killed father. I know it would break his heart. A poor father loved him so dearly."

In vain the mother and sister appealed to the vengeful lad to stay at home, and leave the detection and punishment of the murderers to the officers of the law.

Dick Bacon would not listen to their entreaties, and that very day he bade his mother and sister farewell, to set out in search of the murderers.

"Good-by, mother," he cried. "Good-by, sister. I know that I will have to follow those rascals to far-off lands, for I'm sure they've escaped from this country. I will never return to England again, until I will have avenged my father's murder. If I perish in the attempt, you will hear from me. You know what the old gipsy woman, Meg Merriles, says in the play about spirits coming back to this earth. If death should come to me, and if it is possible that my spirit can come back to earth, you will hear from me. Forgive me, mother, for leaving you; but father's blood calls for vengeance, and I must answer the call. Good-by."

And thus, with fifty pounds in his pocket, and vengeance in his heart, Dick Bacon left his home to take the cars for Liverpool.

Something whispered to the lad that the young murderers had escaped from London, and that it would only be a waste of time to look for them there.

"They'll make for America, he said, "and I'll seek them there as soon as I can. I'll never give up the chase until I kill the pair of them."

As the young avenger rode along in the cars, he tried to lay out some plan of action for the future.

"That beast, Con, is a knowing one," he muttered, "and if he's cut clear of London by this time with his pal, they're fixed up in disguise. But 'twill be a slap-up rig that will keep me from knowing their ugly mugs."

Although this was the first journey of any consequence that Dick had ever undertaken, he was so much engrossed in the pursuit of the young murderers that he paid little or no attention to the scenes and incidents presented on the route.

Seated in the second-class compartment with him were two buxom country girls, whose peculiar dialect and strange manners would at any other time have afforded much amusement to the fun-loving London lad.

Yet indifferent as Dick was to their movements, he could not avoid overhearing a portion of their conversation, and learning therefrom that they were bound for America in search of fortune—that they were, like his cousin Jane, hastening to the distant land to join some relatives.

Dick sat in a corner of the car, his cap drawn down over his eyes, a woolen scarf covering his neck and lower part of the face, and his overcoat buttoned up to the chin, for the weather was cold, and the wind pierced through the cracks in the cheerless cars.

Some of the passengers complained of the bitter cold, and, of course, grumbled at the railway company for the miserable accommodation.

The country girls laughed and tittered, and did not appear to heed the cold, for they seemed to be so well protected with mufflers and scarfs, that their merry faces were completely hidden from their traveling companions.

And these same country lasses were inclined to have some fun at the expense of the grumblers, though their remarks could scarcely be heard by any save Dick, who was seated close behind them.

"They don't feel much put out at leaving home," muttered the lad, as he thought of his Cousin Jane and their sad parting a few days before. "I wonder if Jane is as jolly as they are? Poor Jane! Wouldn't I like to meet her in America."

With all Dick's sorrow he had a soft spot in his heart for that country cousin.

The buxom country girls at length grew tired of "poking fun" at the grumbling passengers, and turned their batteries on the silent Dick.

"He's been a-going for a sojer, Sally," muttered one, as she cast a sly glance at the lad. "An' that be's the reason 'e's so glum loike."

"Nay—nay, lass," retorted the other, with a giggling laugh. "Don't blame the poor lad for that. Didn't yees mind the song of the lassie at the play last night:

"I'm going for a sojer, Jennie,
Going o'er the raging sea;
They've given me a golden guinea,
Which they say has listed me.
'Tis no use to fall a-crying—
Give your foolish weepin' o'er,
Many years ye have heard me sighing—
Ye should have been kind before."

The girl hummed the lines in a serio-comic style, and with a broad Lancashire accent, while her sighs were deep and numerous.

Now Dick felt that the lassies were bent on having a good time at his expense, and though he was in no humor for humbugging, he determined to "tackle" them with their own weapons.

Much to the surprise of the passengers, he raised his voice and burst forth with:

"'Tis all 'round me hat I vears a green villow,
'Tis all 'round me hat for a twelvemonth and a day;

An' if anybody axes me the reason vy I vears it,

I tells them me true love he's gone far away.

SPOKEN.—Buy h'any nice radishes or onions, ladies? H'any h'ortichokes or cauliflowers? Gee up, Neddy."

The effect of Dick's outburst was electrical.

The verse of the old song was given in such a comical way, that most of the passengers burst out into fits of laughter, and some cried:

"Go on. Give us more. That's capital."

They forgot for the time all about the cold and the discomforts of travel, and were only anxious to hear the rest of the song.

Dick paid no attention to the appeals of the other passengers, as his eyes were fixed on the buxom country lasses, and he bent towards them again, inquiringly:

"H'any radishes or onions, ladies?"

The lad expected a saucy reply to his direct question and he was prepared for it.

But he was not prepared for the shrinking silence that came over them.

At the first sound of Dick's voice, both girls sprang from their seats, looked eagerly at the lad from under their hoods, and then shrank back into their seats again without uttering a word.

When the lad put the saucy inquiry to them, they held down their heads so that no one could get a glimpse at their faces, and exchanged some words in the lowest of whispers.

"No radishes or onions to-day—eh, ladies? Gee up, Ned."

Still no word or sign from the merry country lasses.

"Didn't think I could floor them at one round," muttered Dick, as he relapsed into his former position. "Thought I'd have a regular bout of chaff with them. I'll bang it at them again if they trouble me any more during the journey."

But the merry lasses did not trouble Dick, or any one else during the trip.

They were completely squelched.

During the whole journey they sat with their heads bowed down; and when they spoke to each other, it was only in the most subdued whispers.

As Dick was too much absorbed in his own gloomy thoughts, he did not offer to address them again; nor did he take much further notice of them while they remained in the cars.

When the train arrived at Liverpool, the two girls left the car without once looking at Dick.

It was evening at this time, and the lad put up at the first hotel he could find, with the purpose of starting out early in the morning, in order to make inquiries as to the sailing time of the next steamer, as well as to endeavor to discover some trace of the murderers.

Feeling weary after his journey, Dick retired to bed soon after supper.

He slept soundly for some hours, dreaming of his country cousin, of his father, and of the young murderers.

From this slumber he was suddenly aroused by a terrible outcry that rang throughout the hotel.

First came the furious ringing of bells; and then he heard the dreadful cry of:

"Fire—fire! Get up and out! The hotel is in flames."

Dick sprang from his bed in a moment, pulled on a portion of his clothes, and rushed out into the hall.

The first persons he met on the landing were the buxom lasses from Lancashire, and they started back, in evident amazement on beholding Dick.

All was confusion, and hurrying to and fro, and tearing down the stairs, while the smoke and the flames burst from the lower part of the house, threatening at every moment to destroy the unfortunate inmates, who had not, as yet, managed to escape.

"Come down this way, girls," cried Dick, addressing his late fellow-travelers, who stood at the head of the stairs, as if not knowing which way to turn. "Let's get down on the next floor and out of the windows. Quick—quick, or you'll be caught in the flames!"

As Dick spoke, he waved his hands to the girls to follow him, and sprang down the stairs through the blinding smoke.

He had no sooner reached the lower floor, than he received a terrible blow on the back of the head, which sent him reeling to the floor.

Surprised and half-stunned, he stared about in order to ascertain who or what had struck him down.

"Dick Bacon, you blasted fool, you're on our trail, are you? I'll cut you short in your trip, d—n your eyes."

"Heavens!" muttered the lad, as these words were hissed into his ears, and as he recognized the voice of his rascally cousin, Cadger Con, "I'm a goner now."

Standing above were the country girls he had traveled with from London; and each held in her hand one of those short iron weapons used by footpads.

Dick could see the villanous faces under the hoods, and he knew at once that they were his father's murderers thus disguised.

He could also see the weapons raised to strike him again, when a well-known voice fell on his ears.

"Fiends! murderers! don't strike the lad. Would you commit murder at this fearful moment?"

At the sound of that voice, the disguised murderers uttered fearful cries, dropped their weapons, and fled down the stairs.

Dick uttered a cry of surprise as he turned his eyes in the direction from whence the voice proceeded.

"Father—father!" muttered the lad, "you have come back from the grave to save me."

And then the lad sank unconscious on the floor, where he had been struck down by his rascally cousin.

CHAPTER IV.

THE COUNTRY COUSIN AGAIN—A MURDEROUS VISITOR—DICK'S RESOLVE—ON THE TRAIL ONCE MORE—HIDE AND SEEK—OUT AT SEA.

WHEN Dick Bacon opened his eyes again, he was lying on a bed in a small room, while over him bent his country cousin, Jane Williams.

The lad stared at the girl in astonishment for some moments, and then he attempted to speak.

"Hush—hush!" was the girl's warning, as she held up her hand. "The doctor says you must not talk for some time—not till you get stronger."

"What's the row, Jane?" inquired the lad, as he endeavored to raise himself in the bed. "Where am I? What has happened that you're not away?"

"You must not talk, Dick," was the girl's reply. "You got badly injured at the fire. And you must rest quietly for some days."

Then the fearful scene flashed on the boy's mind, and he remembered all that had happened up to the time of his falling back insensible on the landing.

He thought of the bloody scene in his father's shop—of his leaving home—of the country lassies on the car—of the attempt at killing him by the two young fiends—and the mysterious appearance of his dead father at a time when the murderous weapons were raised above his head.

As all these incidents flashed through Dick's mind, he became frantic at the thought that the murderers should escape at a time when he could have denounced them and had them arrested.

"But I must speak—I will speak," cried the lad. "Jane—Jane, I've seen father's murderers. I won't hold my tongue. I must see an officer at once."

"You must hold your tongue, sir," said a stern voice at his side. "Young lady, the steamer will sail ere long. Let your leave-taking be as brief as possible. This young man must have quiet and rest, or I'll not answer for his recovery."

"Good-by, Dick," said the young girl. "You must mind the doctor. I must leave you and go on board the steamer, as we sail early in the morning."

"What steamer?" inquired the lad.

"The *Circassian*," was the reply. "Good-by, cousin. When you get well the doctor will send you back to London again. I will write from America."

And the young girl left the room ere Dick could ask any more questions.

"Back to London," thought the lad, as he stared up in the stern face of the doctor. "I'll never go back there until I've floored Cadger Con and that other scamp."

"You rest now, lad," said the doctor, as he felt the boy's pulse. "You'll be up in a few days."

"But, sir," cried Dick, "I want to tell you about two murderers, and get the police after them. They'll escape if I don't tell about them."

The doctor looked at the excited lad for a moment, and shook his head as he muttered:

"A little delirious. He must be kept very quiet, or fever will set in."

Then the wise man told Dick that he must keep perfectly still, and not trouble himself about anything, or he would not be well for weeks.

"Keep still; not be well for weeks," muttered the excited lad, as the doctor withdrew from the room. "Confound the old codger. There's nothing the matter with me, only this crack on the back of my head. Keep still, and those villains stealing away in that disguise. Dick Bacon isn't a fool."

And then the young lad closed his eyes, and considered what his best move would be towards capturing the fugitives.

When Dick was borne insensible from the burning building by the firemen, he was con-

veyed to a respectable lodging-house in the neighborhood.

There he was recognized by Jane Williams, his country cousin, whose departure for America had been delayed by the breaking of some machinery on the steamer on which she had engaged a passage.

As the steamer was to sail very early on the following day, the young girl was compelled to go on board that afternoon; but in the meantime she wrote to Dick's mother, and acquainted her of the lad's whereabouts.

As Dick lay pondering on the events of the previous night, and his own helpless condition, the door was gently opened, and a female form entered the room.

The woman entered in such a stealthy manner, that the lad did not observe her for some time.

"He's asleep," muttered the woman. "Now, I'll cook his goose for him."

As the woman spoke, she approached a table on which a bowl containing some cold tea was lying.

Drawing a small package from her pocket, she shook its contents into the bowl, and then stirred the tea with a spoon.

"That will settle him better than knife or club," muttered the woman; "and it won't make a fuss. Now, we'll see if the cove follows us to America."

Just as the woman was in the act of placing the powder in the bowl, Dick opened his eyes and looked at her.

Then his heart sank within him as he recognized his villanous cousin in the disguise which he had worn on the previous day.

He was alone, unarmed, and almost helpless, in the room with Cadger Con.

Dick Bacon was as brave as a lion; and in a fair, stand-off fight, he would face the two young scamps every day in the week; but now, he was lying helpless on the bed, with a fearful cut on the back of his head, and standing before him was the desperate fugitive who had murdered his father, and who had twice attempted his own life.

His first impulse was to spring on the murderer, and grasp him by the throat; but a moment's reflection convinced him that such a course would be fatal to him.

Oh, how rapidly the brain works in moments of great anguish and danger.

"He'll kill me at once," thought Dick, "if I pounce on him now; and I haven't anything to knock him over with near me. He'll kill me, and escape. And then I could never avenge poor father. I must keep still, and see what he's up to."

The pretended woman turned away from the table, and approached the bedside.

Of course Dick was sleeping soundly.

"I wonder where the cove has the swag," muttered Cadger Con, as he looked at the sleeping boy, and then at the clothes that were lying on a chair near by.

The next moment the young thief seized the pants and vest, and ran his hands through the pockets, as he continued to mutter:

"Only a few bobs and coppers. He's got the rest about his waist, or else the duffers in the house is keeping it for him. Blow me, if I oughtn't to squeeze his gullet for him, and make off with what swag he has. But he might raise a row, and that wouldn't work well. The powder will fix him, and no one will know what killed him."

Poor Dick could almost feel the breath of his hated enemy as he stood over him meditating murder and robbery; and though his heart beat violently, he pretended to be in a deep slumber.

With a look of disgust, Cadger Con placed the change back in his pocket, muttering:

"Tisn't worth taking, and it might raise a row, and get the police after us. Good-by, Cousin Dick. I'll never see you in this world again."

As the young villain muttered these words, he cast a last glance on his intended victim, and then noiselessly withdrew from the room.

"Won't you, though, you confounded rascal?" muttered Dick, as he opened his eyes and looked towards the door. "Won't you, you murdering scoundrel! By Heavens! I'll be on your track in five minutes, if all the doctors in Liverpool were to order me to stay in bed."

The excited lad sprang out on the floor, seized his clothes, and drew them on as fast as he could.

His blood was all on fire now, and he did not feel any pain from the cut on the back of his head.

"If I can only get out and call the police," he muttered, "we'll nab them at once. Halloo! some one—that rascal, Cadger Con—made off

with my pistol. Thank goodness, my money is safe in the belt."

When Dick had all his clothes on, he went to the window and looked out.

A cab was standing at the door, as if waiting to take some folks away from the house.

"That's for Jane," said the lad. "She isn't gone yet. Oh! if I can only manage to slip out, and tell her what I am up to, we could—halloo! By the living jingo, if there ain't the two rascals—and Jane, too—getting into it this minute. Thunders! if they're not going off with her in the *Circassian*. Here's a go."

The young man looked around the room for his valise, with the purpose of dashing down stairs; but he couldn't find it.

He did not remember that it had been burned up in the fire on the previous night.

One more look out of the window, and he saw that the driver was on his seat, ready to move on.

With an exclamation of rage, he sprang to the door, and in his hurry he upset the bowl that was standing on the table.

"That's a lucky upset," he muttered, as he hastened down the stairs. "Some of the girls might have drank that poisoned stuff that Cadger put there for me; and that would have been the last of them."

Down the stairs and through the hall Dick ran as fast as he could; and, when he opened the door, he saw the cab driving around the corner.

"Where are you going, you foolish lad?" cried a loud voice at his side.

Dick looked up and saw the doctor staring at him.

"After the murderers," yelled the lad, as he dashed down the street after the cab.

"Stop-stop!" cried the doctor; "why, the boy is mad; his brain is on fire."

Dick's brain was on fire, and, as he dashed along the street, he attracted the attention of the idlers, who shouted after him at every corner.

But the lad kept the cab in sight until he was compelled to stop for breath; and then he stood on the sidewalk and gazed after it while he remained in the street.

When it turned the corner leading down to the dock, the excited lad muttered to himself:

"Now, what's to be my next move? I must get on board the *Circassian* and nab them before she leaves. Just to think of them having the audacity to drive off in the same cab with Cousin Jane. That Cadger Con is a deep one; but I'll floor him yet."

Dick was aware that the police of Liverpool were on the lookout for the murderers; and he felt that his wisest plan would be to go to the nearest office and give information of their disguises and whereabouts.

But the young man started out of London with the romantic idea of chasing down the murderers himself, and his recent adventures with the young scamps made him more anxious than ever to encounter them single-handed.

He also felt that his vile cousin, Cadger Con, knew Jane Williams well, for he remembered that in former days they were rivals for the little girl's favor; and it now flashed through Dick's mind that the young scamp would annoy her in some way, should he succeed in escaping in the steamer with her.

"I'll get a pistol," muttered Dick, as he drew his breath, and examined the shops near him. "Then I'll make my way to the steamer, and have at them. She won't sail until the morning, so that I'll have time."

The young lad strolled along the street, inquiring his way to the dock as he went.

Stopping at a gun-shop, he purchased a revolver and cartridges, telling the man that he wanted to shoot rats in his father's yard, and then he made his way to the great docks.

Though Dick Bacon felt rather weak from the loss of blood, and though the wound on his head pained him very much, he thought of nothing for the time but the purpose in hand.

Yet he was so weary when he reached the neighborhood of the docks, and weak and hungry also, that he thought it best to seek some nourishment in the way of some solid dinner at a chop-house near by.

Dick Bacon was an Englishman; and he reasoned that, as he had hard work before him, it would be better to face it with a good supply of beer and ale in his stomach.

While indulging in a hearty dinner, he had time to reflect on the incidents of the former night, and the mysterious appearance of his father's ghost, at the time when the murderers stood over him, puzzled him very much.

Dick Bacon was not superstitious, and his practical father had taught him that ghosts and goblins

were simply the invention of foolish country folks or half-crazed author's stories invented to frighten old women and children.

Yet as he devoured his dinner, he could not banish from his mind the fact that the same respected father, who had been murdered so cruelly on that Christmas night, appeared to him and his murderers in that hour of peril, and that he saved him from a horrid death.

"Cadger and Sam saw him, too," he muttered, "for they slunk away when he called on them not to murder me. 'Twas a queer go, and if I wasn't up out of bed, wide awake from the fire, I'd swear I was dreaming. But father's ghost was there before me, as sure as I'm eating this roast beef now."

Dick did not linger long over his dinner, and it was growing dark when he walked down the dock where the *Circassian* was lying.

Pulling his hat down over his eyes as far as possible, and covering the lower part of his face with the muffler and collar of his coat, he followed the crowd up the gangway and went on board of the steamer.

All was hurry and confusion, as the passengers had just been notified that the vessel would sail that evening at high tide; and the officers were anxious to make up for the delay occasioned by the breaking of the machinery.

Dick Bacon was not aware of this determination, as he understood from Jane Williams that the steamer would not leave until the following morning.

As the officers and the crew were very busy, they did not pay any attention to the lad's inquiries as to the whereabouts of "two countrywomen and a young lady."

"I'll have to look after them myself," thought Dick, as he strolled about the ship.

The lad did look about him eagerly, peering into the cabins first, and then making his way to the steerage.

He was anxious to see Jane Williams once more, and to tell her of his purpose in coming to Liverpool, as well as to warn her of the presence of the murderers in their disguises.

But he was more anxious to see the pretended Lancashire lasses, and to secure them before the steamer sailed.

Down in the steerage, Dick made his way through trunks, and beds, and busy emigrants.

He peered into every berth, and scrutinized the face of everyone that he saw in female clothes; and all the while his hand was on his revolver, as he was determined to kill the murderers if they offered the slightest resistance.

For more than an hour, Dick roamed about the crowded steerage in quest of the disguised thieves; but he could not discover a trace of them.

Yet they were in the steerage, and Cadger Con's eye was on Dick all the time.

It was quite dark when Dick ascended to the deck once more, with the purpose of seeking the captain, and claiming his assistance in capturing the fugitives.

"By the living jingo," he cried, as he stood on the deck and looked around him. "If we ain't going out to sea. Here's a go, and no mistake."

It was only too true.

While Dick was roaming through the steerage in search of his enemies, the steamer had started out on her voyage.

The young lad had too much good sense to attempt any fuss at that moment, as he knew that it would be useless.

"I'll get off at Queenstown," he muttered. "And that will give me a chance to catch the rascals."

CHAPTER V.

THE NEW DISGUISES—THE STORM—A QUEER STOWAWAY—DENNY LANE'S LAST REQUEST—THE OLD IRISH WOMAN—A FRUITLESS SEARCH.

CATCH the rascals, indeed!

Ah, Dick Bacon, you have undertaken a task the accomplishment of which would do honor to the keenest detective in Great Britain.

Cadger Con, though only about one year older than his cousin, was an accomplished scoundrel.

Having received a fair education while living with Dick's father, and having a great liking for variety performances, together with possessing a natural talent in the mimic line, he was enabled to assume and carry out many characters.

When the young rascal left Dick's bedroom, after having placed the poison in the bowl of tea, he hastened to his companion in crime, and they made their preparations for leaving the

lodging-house, and going on board the *Circasian*.

Cadger Con was aware that Jane Williams was about to leave in the same steamer, and he managed to ingratiate himself in the young girl's favor.

The cunning rascal knew that Dick alone was acquainted with the disguise which they had assumed, and, as he had listened at the door while Jane was bidding him farewell, he had no fears of discovery.

While he was about to follow Jane and Sleepy Sam into the cab, he chanced to cast his eye up at the window of Dick's room, and then, to his great surprise, he saw his pursuer standing there and staring out at their movements.

Then he felt that Dick would be after them in hot haste.

Telling the cabman to drive to the dock as fast as possible, he whispered to Sam that "the cove was after them again."

Cadger Con was fighting a battle for life or death; and you may be sure that all his wits were actively at work.

In a hand-to-hand fight, he did not despise his Cousin Dick; but in a battle where cunning and address were to be the weapons, he had very little fear as to the result.

When the cab reached the dock, Cadger Con and his companion told Jane Williams that they had some purchases to make before going on board; and they then hastened to one of those second-hand shops in the neighborhood, in order to procure the necessary articles for disguising themselves more effectually.

When Dick Bacon walked up the plank of the steamer, the fugitives were not two yards behind him, and while he was running about the ship in search of them, Cadger Con was watching him the whole time.

And now they are out at sea; darkness has set in; the wind is blowing at a fearful rate, while all is confusion and dismay, in the steerage at least.

Dick Bacon concluded that it would be useless to make any further search that night, and he made his way back to the steerage, with the intention of taking refuge in one of the unoccupied berths.

All night long the storm raged furiously, and the terror-stricken passengers expected to find a watery grave before morning.

Dick Bacon was tossed about in the empty berth, and when he heard the cries of the women and children as the waves broke over the vessel's side, he could not help wishing himself safe back in his London home.

And yet, when he thought of the mission which he had set out on, he banished all ideas of faint-heartedness from his mind.

Come what would of storm and danger, he was determined to devote his life, if necessary, to the avenging of his father's death.

So, when storm raged at its fiercest, and when the timid passengers looked for death at every lurch of the vessel, Dick consoled himself with the thought that if his last hour had come, the vile murderers would perish with him.

That they were hiding on board somewhere, he had not the slightest doubt.

Then Dick would think of Jane Williams, his country cousin, and he longed to be near her in that hour of danger and darkness.

Morning broke at length, but Dick Bacon did not see the sun shining on the troubled sea, for the weary lad had fallen into a sound slumber.

When the young lad opened his eyes again, the storm had subsided, and quietness reigned on board the steamer.

While he lay in the berth, resolving in his own mind the best course to pursue for the carrying out of his purpose, a loud snoring attracted his attention.

It seemed to proceed from beneath the berth on which he was lying.

Quick as thought, it flashed through Dick's mind that Cadger Con and his companion were hiding under the berth for the purpose of evading him.

"Aha!" muttered Dick, as he laid his hand on the revolver, and crept quietly out of the berth. "I'll nab the rascals now while they're sleeping."

Peering under the berth, the first thing his eye encountered was a pair of rough shoes studded with nails.

"Another disguise," thought Dick. "But Cadger can't hoax me any more."

To seize the shoes and drag the snoring owner out from under the berth was Dick's next move.

"Tare an' ages!" yelled a voice, in a rich Irish brogue, "is it in Heaven I am, at all, or has the Ould Boy got me by the legs?"

"Halloo!" cried Dick, as he looked in astonish-

ment at the owner of the legs; "I think I made a mistake. I thought you were some one else."

"Faith, an' I made a mistake, too," returned the Irish lad, as he grinned at Dick; "for I thought I was in the lower regions, an' I took you for Ould Nick himself. What the mischief did you wake a poor gorsoon for?"

Before Dick could reply three officers of the steamer approached the lads and demanded their tickets.

"Oh, holy Moses!" muttered the Irish lad, as he rubbed his head, "'tis ruined I am intirely. Bad luck to you, for a Sassenach thief. What did ye drag me out of me hole for at all?"

"Tickets, lads," demanded one of the officers.

"I have no ticket, sir," faltered Dick, as he was placing his hand in his wallet to draw some money, "but I am prepared to pay —"

"The devil a ticket have I," interrupted the Irish lad, with a rueful look; "and the mischief a penny have I to me name."

Then turning to Dick, he muttered:

"Bad luck to ye, for dragging me out of me hole."

"What!" cried the officer, as he glared angrily at the two lads; "how dare you come on board the steamer without securing tickets? Two stowaways, Tom. Drag them up before the captain. Stowaways, eh? Oh, won't you chaps catch it before long?"

The officer would not listen to a word that Dick had to say; and they were dragged up the stairs to the deck, followed by many of the passengers.

Cadger Con had witnessed the scene, and feeling perfectly safe in his present disguise, he ascended to the deck after his foe.

Dick was not in the least alarmed about himself, but as he looked at the poor Irish lad by his side, he felt that he was to blame for exposing him to the anger of the officers.

He often heard of the cruel treatment which the unfortunate "stowaways" had to bear, and there was something in the Irish boy's appearance and manner that made him an object of compassion.

"Stowaways!" roared the captain, as the lads were dragged before him. "Here now, you young rascals, why did you dare attempt to rob the company?"

"Please, sir," said Dick, as he lifted his hat and bowed to the stern officer, "I am not a stow-away; I came on board last evening to see my cousin off, and the steamer was out to sea before I knew it."

Dick did not deem it wise to mention his main object in visiting the steamer.

"A fine story, indeed," cried the captain.

"And I don't believe a word of it; I'll have you well whipped, and then will hand you over to the authorities at Queenstown. Cousin, indeed! What is your cousin's name?"

"Jane Williams, sir," replied the lad. "She's —"

"Dick, dear Dick," cried the young girl, as she sprang forward and embraced the young lad. "Is it possible that you are here?"

"Oh, Holy Moses," muttered the Irish lad. "Isn't it a murderin' pity that she wouldn't hug me, too, and call me dear Denny, and then they'd let me alone."

The captain looked at the young girl, and then at Dick.

Jane Williams had been placed in his charge by a friend in Liverpool, and he recognized her at once.

"Who is this young person, Miss Williams," he inquired.

"My Cousin Dick, sir," she answered. "Richard Bacon, from London. You heard of his father's murder on Christmas night."

"Umph," grunted the captain. "And so he followed you all the way to Liverpool to bid you good-by, eh?"

"No, sir," replied the young lad, as the blood mounted to his face. "I came to Liverpool to find my father's murderers. And I followed them on board this steamer."

"What!" cried the captain, as he gazed sternly at the young lad. "Murderers on board of this steamer? Where are they, lad? Point them out to me."

Several of the passengers from the cabin were now assembled on the deck, and they were listening to the proceedings with much interest; while the steerage people looked on from the forward part of the vessel.

Among the cabin passengers was a flashily-dressed woman of middle age, who held a beautiful young girl by the hand.

This woman appeared to be much excited when she heard Jane Williams mention Dick's name and place of residence; and when the young lad

spoke of his father's murder, the woman's agitation increased.

"Well, sir," continued the captain, addressing Dick, "what and where are those murderers you speak of? Come, point them out to me at once."

"Please, sir," replied the lad, as he cast a glance around among the passengers, "if you would favor me with a few minutes' time alone, I will tell you all about them. And, sir, don't take me for a stowaway, for I have money to pay my way to Ireland, and to America, if necessary."

"Well—well, lad," said the captain, who was impressed with the boy's looks and words, "if you will stand aside with your cousin, I will attend to you very soon."

"'Tis my turn next," muttered the Irish lad. "Begor, I'm not after me father's murderers, only after himself. Faith, but I'm thinkin' 'tis murdered I'll be alive afore I find him."

The captain's stern countenance was now turned on the trembling Irish lad, and in a harsh voice he demanded:

"Well, you ragged rascal, what have you to say for yourself before we fling you overboard?"

The Irish lad looked at the captain, and then out on the ocean as he replied:

"Begorra, yer honor, but 'tis me mother's murderers that meself is after."

"What, you impudent scoundrel!" cried the captain, in a rage. "Do you dare to trifle with me? I'll have you flogged within an inch of your life, and then fling you overboard."

"You may do it an' welcome, sir," returned the lad, in a sad tone. "Only maybe you'd grant the last request of a dyin' sowl?"

"What's that?" inquired the captain, somewhat appeased by the lad's humility.

"'Tis no use in askin' ye, sir," returned the lad, as he gazed out on the troubled waters, while the tears welled up into his eyes.

The captain, who was really a kind-hearted man, was moved by the lad's sad face and tearful eyes; and, in gentler tones, he said:

"What is your last request, Paddy?"

"Me name isn't Paddy, sir," returned the boy. "'Tis Denny, sir. Denny Lane, sir. But, sure 'tis no matter what ye call me, an' ye going to throw me into the murderin' water there."

"That's what we do with all stowaways, Denny," replied the captain. "Seize him, men, give him four dozen on the bare back, and then pitch him overboard."

"Oh, worra—worra," yelled the terrified lad, as the officers laid their hands on him. "Won't ye hear to the dyin' request of a poor sinner?"

"What is it, Denny," inquired the captain.

"If it's anything reasonable, I'll grant it."

"Faith, sir, but there's rhyme and reason in it, sir," cried the lad. "An' may Heaven be yer bed if ye—if ye only do what I ax you."

"But you must go overboard, Denny; and you must get a good flogging."

"That's what I am willin' to bear, sir," cried the lad, in the saddest of tones. "I deserre the drowin' an' the floggin', and God give me courage to bear them bravely, for 'tis weak enough I am with the hunger now."

"But your last request, Denny?" cried the captain.

"An' ye'll grant it, sir?"

"I will," said the captain.

"Faith sir," cried Denny, with a droll smile on his tearful face, "all I ask is not to throw me over into the water till we reach the Cove of Cork, an' don't flog me till after I'm drowned. Sure, 'tis all the same to you."

Roars of laughter greeted this moderate and modest request; and the good natured captain enjoyed the joke right heartily.

"Is there nothing else that I can do to smooth your way to eternity, Denny?" he asked, as he once more assumed a grave face.

"Faith, but there is, sir."

"What is it?" inquired the captain. "Come, put aside your native modesty, and speak out. What else can we do for you before sending you on this long voyage?"

"Well, sir," returned Denny, "if ye wouldn't think I was makin' too free, I'd be after axing ye to give me a full stomach agin the long journey. 'Twas always told me that they gave lashings to the poor devils they hung, so that they wouldn't go into the other world fastin'."

"Excellent!" roared the captain, while the officers and passengers applauded the humor of the unfortunate Irish lad. "Excellent, by Jove!"

Then the captain called one of the officers aside, and said in a low voice:

"Take that fellow down to the cook, and give him a good dinner. Give him a crown, and put him ashore at Queenstown. I'd take him to New York, were it not that I don't want to en-

courage other rascals. There's infinite humor in that fellow."

Denny Lane was led away by the officer; and then the captain beckoned Dick to follow him into the cabin.

In clear and concise words, the young lad told the captain the story of the murder, and of his subsequent adventures, at the same time giving his reasons for believing that the murders were on board the *Circassian*.

The captain summoned an officer, and called for the list of passengers; and, requesting Dick to accompany him, proceeded to the steerage.

They went from berth to berth, and closely examined every passenger, but they could not find any trace of the pretended young woman from Manchester.

"'Tis strange, sir," said Dick to the captain. Miss Williams can tell you that they came down to the steamer in the cab with her. They must be hiding on board somewhere."

"I don't understand it," replied the captain. "Halloo, who have we here? What's your name, woman?"

This question was addressed to an old woman who was sitting on a berth near where Dick had rested the previous night.

"Is it my name, sir?" returned the old creature in a low, weak voice. "My name is Kitty Donovan, sir, and me daughter that's down here with the saysickness, is Norry, af you plase."

The captain looked at the old woman and at the figure in the berth, and then passed on.

Dick cast only a passing glance at the old creature, for he had not the slightest suspicion of encountering Cadger Con in such a disguise.

The captain and his party had no sooner withdrawn from the steerage, than old Kitty Donovan bent down over her daughter and whispered into her ear:

"Norry, me darlin', wasn't that a narrow escape? Och, be the powers, but I thought we were nabbed."

"Hush, Con," returned the pretended Norry. "We must carry this game out."

"Call me mother, if you plase," said the old woman. "An' sure 'tis I'm the good mother to ye. Curse that Dick Bacon; he'll never leave this ship till we get to New York. But, by the gods, sonny, we'll cook his goose for him yet. I'll go up on deck now, and have my eye on him. You play the sick dodge if any one comes near you."

And the pretended Kitty Donovan, with feeble steps and bent frame, hobbled on deck to watch the movements of her determined pursuer.

CHAPTER VI.

DICK BOUND FOR A LONG VOYAGE—SHADOWED—DENNY LANE PLEADS HIS CASE—THE LADY IN THE CABIN—CADGER CON AND SLEEPY SAM AT WORK WITH A VENGEANCE.

CADGER CON was right when he asserted that Dick Bacon would attempt to remain on the vessel until they arrived at New York.

Though the captain and the officers instituted a thorough search for the murderers all over the vessel, Dick was still firm in his belief that they were on board; and yet, for the life of him, he could not conceive what disguise they had assumed.

It was a glorious Sunday afternoon, as the noble vessel steamed into the beautiful harbor of Queenstown; and Dick and Jane Williams walked side by side on deck, as they looked on the shores of the Emerald Isle, and spoke of the future before them.

"So you will come to New York, Dick?" inquired the girl, as Dick expressed his belief that his enemies were on board.

"Yes, Jane," was the reply, "I have sworn that I will never go back to London until I have avenged father. They may not be on this vessel, but I feel assured that they will make for America, and that I will meet them there. I might as well go in this steamer now, as I have started so far by mere accident."

"You'll never get to New York, you duffer," muttered the pretended old Irish woman, as she stood at the side of the vessel, gazing out on the shore. "Call me a mutton-head if I don't cook your goose this very night."

"Jane," continued Dick, "I have a feeling over me that some one is watching me all the time. I'm sure that scamp of a cousin of ours is on hand here somewheres."

"I notice that lady with the young girl there looking at you a good deal, Dick," said Jane, as her eye was directed towards the flashily-dressed lady who had taken such a deep interest in the scene on deck earlier in the day.

"Who is she?" inquired the lad.

"She's the wife of an actor, going out to meet her husband," replied Jane. "She's in the state-room next to mine. You'll come out in the cabin, won't you, Dick, if you do come?"

"No, Jane, I'll go in the steerage; I want to save all the money I can; and besides, I think that Con and the other cove are stowed away down there yet."

"Oh, Dick!" cried the girl, "I'm afraid they'll murder you some night, if they are."

"I'm not afraid, Jane," returned the lad. "I'm well prepared for them now."

And talking away in this strain, the two cousins continued to pace the deck until the steamer anchored in the harbor.

Then Dick approached the captain, informed him of his determination to remain on the vessel, and paid him for a steerage passage, declaring that he would take the berth that he had occupied the previous night.

It was growing quite dark, as Dick went down into the steerage, taking with him a blanket and pillow that Jane Williams had given him.

On reaching his berth, he found it already occupied.

"Halloo!" cried Dick, as he shook the intruder. "What are you doing in my berth?"

"Whist, ye divil!" was the whispered reply. "Can't ye let a poor gorseon alone?"

"Ha-ha! Denny," said Dick, as he recognized the voice of the Irish lad. "'Tis you, eh? What are you doing in my berth, I'd like to know?"

"Be aisy now, will you, and lave me alone? Sure they're goin' to drown me, an' I'm hidin' here from them."

"But they'll find you here, lad," said Dick. "The steamer is in Queenstown harbor, and they'll put you on shore."

"That's just where I don't want them to put me," replied Denny. "They'll never think of lookin' for me twice in the same place. And maybe they won't think of looking for me at all, if ye'll only hould yer whist."

"Then you're bound to go the whole voyage, Denny?" inquired Dick.

"Begorra I am, if I have to swim there. The blessing of God and my blessing be on ye, and don't tell on me till we're out to say agin. Every sowl belongin' to me is in America, and 'tis dyin' I am to be there with them. I strayed away from the family in Liverpool, and they were off in the ship afore I could find them. Hould your whist, an' I'll pray for ye night an' morning."

Dick's heart warmed to the poor Irish outcast, and he felt that it would be a great pity to force him from the ship.

"Poor fellow," he thought. "I can't betray him. I'll help him all I can. He doesn't seem to be a bad fellow. And who can blame him for trying to get to his friends?"

"Ye won't tell on me, will ye?" asked Denny, in a low, anxious voice.

"I won't, Denny," replied Dick. "I'll help you all I can, and I hope you'll succeed in getting to New York."

"The blessing of the unfortunate be on you," was the fervent prayer of the Irish lad. "Will ye tell me yer name?"

"Dick Bacon," was the reply.

"I'll never forget that name," muttered Denny. "And who knows but I might do you a good turn yet. Whist, now, for the others might hear us."

Dick lay down on the berth beside his new friend, and gave him a share of the blanket and pillow.

As the stowaway had surmised, the officers of the steamer did not think of him, in the hurry of getting the mails and passengers on board from the tug.

Dick looked around the steerage, as he lay in the berth, in the hope of seeing his enemies.

He saw the pretended Irishwoman sitting on the side of her berth, her head bent down, holding a whispered conversation with the "say-sick daughter."

Oh, if Dick Bacon could only hear that dialogue, what an infinite amount of danger and trouble would be avoided.

But all Dick could hear at the time was the loud snoring of his companion, who had fallen asleep by his side.

"Confound the fellow," muttered the lad. "There he sleeps and snores; and he doesn't know the moment he'll be dragged out of the berth and flung and kicked on shore. He's a Paddy-go-easy, and no mistake."

Then Dick turned on his side; and in less than ten minutes he was sleeping soundly also.

Walking up and down in her narrow state-room, was the lady who had taken such deep interest in Dick's movements and the mention of his father's murder.

"I must go and see him," she muttered at

length. "I must hear the story from his own lips. 'Tisn't possible that the ungrateful fellow could have killed and robbed his uncle. Oh, dear me; but my punishment is terrible."

"What is the matter, mother?" inquired the young girl who had accompanied the woman on deck. "The story the captain told you about that dreadful murder is annoying you."

"It is, Ellen. I must see this young man. I knew his father in days gone by. Will you come on deck with me. I must hear the story from his own lips. Oh, I trust there's some mistake about my— Come, Ellen."

Taking the young girl's hand, the woman led her through the cabin out on the deck, and they walked silently to the forward part of the vessel.

The tug had just left the side of the vessel; and the woman knew, by the noise of the engines working, that they were under way once more.

The woman and her daughter met no one as they walked along the narrow passage, for the greater portion of the officers and crew were busy elsewhere.

Just as they reached the stairway leading down to the steerage, two women appeared on deck, bearing between them what appeared to be a human form.

"Some person that's sick," muttered the woman, as she drew her daughter back some steps.

The two women did not observe the lady and her daughter; and they proceeded with the burden to the side of the vessel.

"Over he goes, Sam," whispered one of the women, as they lifted their victim over the bulwarks.

"Gracious Heaven!" cried the lady, as she sprang forward. "you vile wretches, would you commit murder?"

The words were scarcely uttered when a splash in the water told the story.

The lady was so terrified at witnessing this terrible crime that she could not utter a word, while her daughter clung to her side and sobbed with fright.

"Knock them over, Sam," whispered Cadger Con.

The disguised ruffian drew two shortclubs and sprang on the mother and daughter; and, ere they had recovered from their terror, they received terrible blows on the head, which laid them insensible on the deck.

"Their goose is cooked," hissed Cadger Con. "Now we'll have time to put on the disguise before any fuss is raised."

"Ye murdering villains," yelled Denny Lane, as he confronted the assassins on the deck, "ye'll swing for this night's work."

"You Irish fool!" hissed Cadger Con, as he raised his club and struck the Irish lad. "We'll cook your goose, too."

Down went poor Denny, half-stunned and bleeding.

"Over with him, too," said Cadger Con, as he bent down and seized the lad. "Let him go after his mate."

Another effort on the part of the desperate murderers and Denny Lane met the fate that the captain had threatened him with in the morning.

One glance at the insensible females, and Cadger Con and his companion slipped down into the steerage.

Out in the dark water, Dick Bacon and Denny Lane are struggling for life.

On the deck the lady and her daughter are lying insensible, with the blood flowing from their wounds.

Down in the steerage Cadger Con and Sleepy Sam are congratulating themselves on having disposed of their enemies.

Ah, Cadger Con, 'tis little you dream that you have struck down the mother who bore you, on this dark night.

And still the steamer plows her way out of the beautiful harbor while Jane Williams thinks of her Cousin Dick, and prays for his safety.

CHAPTER VII.

AFTER THE OUTRAGE—THE SEARCH FOR THE MURDERERS—A MOTHER'S ANGUISH—THE PALE FACE AT THE WINDOW—CADGER CON'S FEARS AND HOPES.

THE *Circassian* had not proceeded far on her voyage when a sailor stumbled over the prostrate forms of the woman and her young daughter.

Then the alarm was raised at once, and the insensible victims were borne into the cabin.

Great was the commotion on board the steamer when the lady recovered from the shock, and in a trembling voice, related what she had witnessed on deck, at the same time telling of the

murderous assault on her daughter and herself.

The captain was thunderstruck; and so were all those that heard her story.

"Great God!" cried the captain. "The young lad was right. We have murderous scoundrels on board. Call all the officers and men on duty. We'll search every inch of the vessel. The fiends must be discovered."

The lady gave as correct a description of the disguised females as she was able, for it must be remembered that the night was dark, and that she was much terrified when they bore their victim to the side of the vessel.

Imperfect as the description was, it coincided with Dick's account of the disguise assumed by the young murderers.

Jane Williams heard the commotion, and it flashed through her mind at once that something had occurred to Dick.

While the officers and captain were making a thorough investigation in the steerage, the young girl rushed in among them, exclaiming:

"Dick! Dick Bacon! Oh, where is he?"

"Dick Bacon," rang out the captain, in his loudest tones.

"He's asleep," muttered the pretended old woman, as Cadger Con chuckled to himself:

"Call louder, and he'll answer you."

Again and again the captain sang out for Dick Bacon, but of course there was no response.

"Poor Richard," sobbed Jane Williams, "I knew that they would murder him."

Then the captain knew that the young Londoner was the murderer's victim.

In the excitement of the moment, no one thought of the poor stowaway, Denny Lane.

Jane Williams was led back to her state-room, weeping and sobbing, and then the search went on.

The captain examined the berth which had been occupied by Dick Bacon, but no evidence of a struggle could be found there.

He questioned the old Irish woman, who was now lying in her berth outside her pretended daughter, but the old creature pretended to be half asleep, and she declared that she didn't see the lad since he came down with the blanket and pillow.

The captain and the officers were sorely puzzled at the mysterious outrage, and at the still more mysterious disappearance of the murderers.

Where were they hiding?

Every nook and corner of the steamer was examined, and without avail.

After spending hours in this examination, the captain entered the cabin and approached the lady who had witnessed the outrage, and who was known on board as Mrs. Caxton.

"Did you hear them speak at all, Mrs. Caxton?" inquired the captain, after he had announced his failure to discover the culprits.

"Only one of them spoke," returned the woman, "and that was in a low voice."

"Would it be possible for you to recognize that voice again, Mrs. Caxton?"

The woman's heart beat violently as she replied:

"I hardly think so, sir. And yet I possibly could. I am sure that it was a man's voice."

"Well, ma'am," continued the captain, "I will examine every passenger on board the steamer in the morning; and I would request that you take a position in that office, where you can see and hear every one, without being observed yourself. I must discover those fiends."

Mrs. Caxton replied that she would willingly comply with this suggestion.

Very little sleep was enjoyed on board of the *Circassian* that night, for the officers, crew and passengers were all fearfully agitated over the mysterious doing of the disguised fugitives.

When Mrs. Caxton retired to the state-room, where her daughter was lying in the berth, she burst into tears.

"Oh, gracious Heavens!" she muttered, "is it possible that one of those wretches is my own son? And am I doomed to betray him to the gallows? This is more than I can bear any longer. I must wait till morning. If Cornelius is among the passengers I will know him, no matter what his disguise may be. Oh, it can't be possible! 'Tis too horrible to dream of!"

The surgeon on the ship had examined and dressed the wounds of the mother and daughter, and he declared that they were more frightened than hurt.

Not a wink of sleep came to the eyes of Mrs. Caxton that night; and pale was her face as she took her place in the office in the morning for the

purpose of examining the passengers as they appeared before the captain.

When it was announced in the steerage that every passenger would be required to pay a visit to the captain, Cadger Con and Sleepy Sam trembled.

This ordeal was more than they had bargained for.

"I'm not afraid of the racket, Sam," said Cadger Con, as they lay in the berth. "But how will you work it?"

"Oh, I'm sick," was the reply. "I can't stand on my pins; and you must face the music for both of us."

And the young scamp was dreadfully seasick.

As it was his first venture on the sea, the rolling of the vessel affected him in the usual way; and lying there, with his blue eyes and somewhat effeminate face, while the false flowing hair covered his head, no casual observer would have suspected that he was a young man.

"I'll work the game with the captain, Sam," said Cadger Con, "and you must keep up the sick dodge. Try and put on a little of the Irish brogue, and speak very low, if they come down here to pump you."

One by one the grown passengers in the steerage were led into the captain's cabin, and questioned as to the events of the previous night.

With anxious heart Mrs. Caxton watched and listened in the office, fearing all the time that she would discover her rascally son among them.

At length all the passengers have passed the ordeal, save the old Irish woman and her daughter.

Kate Donovan and Norah, her daughter, were the last names on the passenger list.

When Cadger Con found that Dick was on his track on the dock, he purchased tickets at the office under these assumed names, and as they had not secured their berths until a short time before the steamer sailed, they were the last entered on the books.

The captain had given up all hope of discovering the murderers by the means he had adopted when he found that the old Irish woman and her daughter were the only persons that remained to be examined.

All the other passengers were subjected to the closest scrutiny; but when the old creature was ushered into the cabin the perplexed man did not deem it worth his while to waste much time with her.

With downcast eyes, and apparently trembling in every limb, she hobbled into the captain's presence.

"Your name?" inquired the captain.

"Kitty Donovan," was the answer.

"Where's your daughter?"

"Af ye please, sir, she can't stir; she's that bate out wid the say-sickness."

"You are within a few berths of this young lad that's missing," continued the captain.

"Didn't you hear any noise last night?"

The pretended old woman raised her eyes at that moment, and she stared around the cabin.

Suddenly a convulsive shriek shook her whole frame, and she staggered back, as she placed her hand to her side and sighed heavily.

Cadger Con saw the pale, excited face of the lady staring out at him from the office window, and he knew that he was discovered.

"My mother," thought the young villain. "What in the mischief brought her here? Will she betray me?"

"Why don't you answer me, woman?" said the captain. "What is the matter with you?"

"A suddint wakeness come over me, your honor," faltered the old creature. "I—I—I'll be better in a minit."

"Take the old woman out in the air," said the captain, to an officer, "and order her a little brandy. She seems to be very faint."

With tottering steps and terror in his heart, Cadger Con followed the officer out on deck.

He expected every moment to hear a shout from the cabin announcing his doom.

He had no reason to hope that his mother would shield him by her silence; for he had treated her cruelly in the past, and he was now aware that he had attempted to murder her and his sister on the previous night.

No old toper ever clutched a glass with a more nervous hand than did Cadger Con as he swallowed the brandy which the captain had ordered.

As he swallowed the liquor he turned his eyes towards the cabin door, fearing to see and hear the rush of his pursuers.

"Poor old thing," muttered the officer who had given him the brandy. "She's very nervous; go down to your berth now, ma'am, and rest."

The trembling wretch hastened down to his

companion, and low and faint was the whispered salutation.

"Sam—Sam, we're betrayed. The folks we knocked down on deck last night was mother and Ellen. Mother saw me, and she knows me. The game is up. Our goose is cooked, old fellow."

A groan from Sam was the only response.

The guilty wretch was in such misery from his sea-sickness, that he was unable to realize fully their terrible position.

Half an hour passed away, and Cadger Con, in all his agony, commenced to entertain a hope that his mother would not betray him.

"If it was only night," he thought, "hanged if I wouldn't grab one of the boats somehow; and we'd take the chances of getting picked by another ship."

As hour after hour passed away, the young villain's courage revived.

"We're all safe," he muttered. "Mother is sound on the goose; and she has made up her mind not to squeal on us."

In the meantime that wretched mother is incapable of uttering a syllable that would lead to his detection, for she is lying in her state-room in a state of delirium.

When the captain entered the office where the woman had been placed to watch and listen, he found her lying insensible on the floor.

The verification of her worst fears was more than she could bear; and the terrible knowledge that her own son was the murderer of his uncle, and also the fiend who had flung Dick Bacon into the sea, deprived her of reason.

All day long, and during the night, the crazed woman raved wildly, as she called on her distressed daughter to save her from her fiendish son.

Late in the day, it was rumored about the steamer that there was a mad woman in the cabin.

Cadger Con heard the rumor, and the cunning rascal suspected at once who the mad woman was, and why her mind was deranged.

"We're all safe now, Sam," he whispered; "let us play our cards right to the end of the voyage, and the game is in our hands."

And so far the desperate game was all in favor of the fugitives, but who can tell what the next shuffle of the cards will bring forth?

CHAPTER VIII.

THE "STOWAWAY'S" STRUGGLE FOR LIFE—DENNY PROVES A FRIEND IN NEED—THE RESCUE—OUTWARD BOUND ONCE MORE—THE GHOST ON THE DECK—THE BURNING VESSEL.

As Denny Lane, the poor Irish "stowaway," was lying in the berth beside Dick Bacon, he dreamed that the officers of the ship were carrying out the captain's threat of consigning him to the waves.

The lad was so terribly frightened that his slumbers were rudely broken, and he sat up in the berth and stared around.

At that moment he missed the English lad from his side, and when he saw the pretended women bearing him up out of the hold to the deck, he muttered:

"The chap must be taken sick all of a sudden, and them women is taking him up in the air. Begob, I'll go up and see what's wrong with him. He behaved dacint to me, and none of them will notice me this dark night up there."

Great was Denny's astonishment on reaching the deck to find that the pretended women had flung his new friend overboard, and that they had turned on Mrs. Caxton and her daughter.

But greater still was his surprise when he found himself lifted over the side of the vessel, and dashed into the bay.

"Murder in Irish," yelled the Irish lad, as he rose to the surface. "Am I sleeping or waking, or what's happened to me at all?"

Denny Lane was a good swimmer; and, as he spoke, he struck out manfully, at the same time raising his voice and shouting for help.

"Help—help!" sang out another voice near him. "Is that you, Denny Lane?"

"Begor, it is," replied the Irish lad, as he struck out towards a dark object near him. "The murdering villains took me at me word, and flung me into the water. Bad luck to them, that didn't give me daylight for the swim."

"I'm fainting," cried Dick Bacon. "I can't hold out any longer. Give me a hand, or I'll go down."

"Bear up, man," returned Denny. "There's the little ship beyond us here. There now. Don't take hold of me, but let me hold ye up as well as I can."

As the Irish lad spoke he placed one hand under Dick Bacon's throat, and then shouted:

"Help—help! There's two poor devils drowning here, if you don't save us."

The people in the tug heard Denny's cry, and they immediately lowered a boat.

"Keep up a few moments," rang out a manly voice, "and we'll be on. Who in the mischief are ye, and how did ye get out here?"

"Don't be axing any questions now," cried Denny. "Me mouth is full of salt water. Good luck to ye, for brave, dacent fellows."

As the lad spoke, the men in the boat seized Dick Bacon, who was completely exhausted, and dragged him out of the water.

Denny was also seized and dragged into the boat.

"That's the narrowest escape I ever had," cried the Irish lad. "Oh, Lord—I hope the poor fellow isn't gone after all me trouble."

Dick Bacon, his face as pale as death, was lying insensible before him.

"He'll come to," cried one of the rescuers. "Let's get him on the tug."

"Heavens alive, man!" cried Denny, "wouldn't it be just as handy for ye to put us on the big ship where our passage out is paid?"

"What ship?" inquired the man.

"The *Circassian*, of course," replied Denny. "That's the ship we took passage in at Liverpool. Oh, murder—murder! will I ever get to America at all?"

"Not in the *Circassian*, at least," said the man, "for she's out to sea now."

"Bedad, then," cried Denny, "but I'll take the law of the captain for taking me money, and thin laving us behind this way. Oh, worra—worra, what will we do at all?"

The heart of the poor fellow sank within him when he saw that his chances of getting a free passage were thus frustrated.

"'Tis thankful ye ought to be," said one of the men, "to get saved from a watery grave. How in the mischief did ye both get overboard at all?"

"Faith," cried Denny, "'tis more than I can tell. It seems like a drame to me altogether. Only I'm shivering here now in me wet clothes, I'd be thinking I was still in me berth wid that English gorsoon there. Wait till I get something to take the cold out of me heart, and I'll tell ye all that happened."

The boat was now alongside the little steamer, and Dick Bacon was borne into the cabin, where Denny Lane followed him.

The officers of the little steamer poured some brandy down the throat of the insensible lad, and in a few minutes he was sitting up and staring at Denny.

The Irish lad was delighted to see his new friend recovering his senses, but he dreaded that some chance words might fall from Dick that would betray his own position while on board of the outgoing steamer.

Denny was determined to get to America; and he perceived that the best plan to gain that end would be to keep up the story that he was a regular passenger on board the *Circassian*.

"Where am I?" muttered Dick, as he stared at the officers and Denny.

"You're on board a steam-tug in Queenstown Harbor," replied one of the officers.

Dick grasped Denny's hand and shook it warmly, as he muttered:

"I remember now; you saved my life when I was sinking, Denny. I'll never forget that for you; and I'll pay your passage if—"

The English lad placed his hand inside his clothes, and a sigh of relief burst from him when he found that his money was safe.

"Is it pay my passage," cried Denny. "I'll have ye to know that me passage is paid once; and they'll take me to America, too, or I'll know for what. There's plenty more ships sailing from Cork harbor, and, bedad, they'll have to give us a passage in one of them, if there's any law or justice in the land."

Dick Bacon stared a moment at the "stow-away," but a sly wink from the Irish lad told him the game he intended to play.

The English lad would have preferred to pay the stranger's passage out than to be a party in any game of deception; yet he saw now that it would not be good policy to betray his friend.

"The poor fellow saved my life," he thought, "and I will not expose him."

In the meantime the officers of the tug had given the boys a change of clothes, as well as some more brandy; and then Dick told his story in simple language, that impressed his hearers.

He was careful to avoid any reference to Denny's position on board the steamer.

"Oh, there will be no trouble about you lads getting passage in another ship of the line that

will call in here to-morrow or next day," said the head officer of the tug. "In the meantime I'll inform the authorities of what has happened, and they will telegraph to New York to have those rascals caught. Remain on board here to-night, and in the morning I will see about you."

Denny Lane was in great humor at the prospect of getting a free passage after all.

"Begorra," he whispered in Dick's ear, "but 'twas a lucky swim, after all. They'd had given me a dog's life on the other ship if they found me again; and now I'm safe for a dacent passage if me luck holds out at all: and, bedad, Dick agra—something tells me but we'll pay them murdering bastes off yet."

"I'll follow them to the world's end," was Dick's reply.

"Begor, but I'd follow them to the other world," said Denny. "They're the biggest rascals I ever saw or heard of. How did they stale you out of bed at all?"

"I can't tell, Denny," replied Dick. "They must have tied my legs and hands while I was asleep. I don't remember anything until they were lifting me over the side of the ship. 'Twas fortunate that my hands got free when I struck the water."

The officers of the tug now went on shore, leaving the vessel in charge of the engineer and two of the hands.

As Dick was much exhausted after the adventures of the night, he retired to rest at once; but Denny Lane, who was now elevated in mind and body, sat up for some time chatting with the men, and telling them wonderful stories of his adventures in England.

On the following morning they went on shore and saw the magistrate of the place, as well as the agent of the line of steamers.

As Dick persisted in setting out after the murderers as soon as possible, and as there was an outward bound steamer expected that evening, the two lads were furnished with tickets for the trip.

Twenty-four hours after their narrow escape from a watery grave, the English and Irish lads, who were now sworn friends, were sailing out of Queenstown Harbor once more.

"If we can only reach New York before them," said Dick Bacon, as he lay beside Denny that night, "they'll not escape me this time."

"Faith," returned the Irish lad, "but I think we have every chance of that. I don't believe the ship will ever get safe to dry land that's got such villains as them on her."

"Don't say that, Denny," said Dick. "My cousin, Jane Williams, is on her."

"I'm sorry for her, then; for, bedad, I'd bet me old canteen that something awful happens to that same ship before she gets to New York."

"And I'm afraid, Denny, that the rascals will give Jane trouble before long."

"I wonder who it could be that they knocked down just as I came on deck last night?" was Denny's remark. "There was two women, as well as I could see in the dark."

"I'm sure I can't say, Denny. Let us hope that our sleep won't be broken to-night."

"I don't want another swim in the dark, at all events," said Denny. "Begorra, but 'twas cute of me to get me free passage after all."

"Hush!" was Dick's warning. "Some one may overhear you."

"Begob, but you're right. Here goes for happy drames of lashings and lavings on the green fields of America."

And the light-hearted Irish lad was soon snoring away at a fearful rate.

When Dick and his companion went on board the second steamer, he forebore to mention his adventures to any of his fellow-passengers, as he was anxious to surprise the murderers in New York, if possible.

On the fourth night of the voyage, he was walking on the deck when he encountered an old man.

"My God!" muttered the lad, as he stared at the figure before him, "'tis my father's ghost."

And the next moment he ran down to the berth where he had left Denny.

"Denny—Denny," he cried, and his face was as pale as death, "do you believe in ghosts?"

"Of course I do," was Denny's reply. "And by the holy poker, but you look like one now. What ails you, man?"

"I saw my father a moment ago on deck, Denny," he muttered. "That's the second time I saw him since I left London."

"That's queer," said Denny; "but you know that they say ghosts appear the third time, and come to warn you of some great trouble."

At that moment a wild cry broke on their ears.

"A ship on fire—a ship on fire!" rang out on deck.

In a few minutes all was commotion on board the steamer, and Dick and Denny hastened on deck.

Great was the relief of the excited passengers when they found that it was a strange vessel, some miles off, that was burning.

CHAPTER IX.

ON BOARD THE "*CIRCASSIAN*"—DICK AND DENNY ON THE WATCH—THE GHOST AGAIN.

DENNY LANE spoke in a prophetic strain when he declared that the *Circassian* would encounter some terrible misfortune on her voyage.

The captain and the officers were ever on the alert to discover the murderers; and they were also apprehensive that other outrages would be committed by the wretches.

Mrs. Caxton was now confined to her stateroom, a prey to anguish and remorse.

She knew that her own son—a murderer flying from an ignominious death—was on board the vessel; and while she could not speak the words that would betray him, she trembled with apprehension that he would be discovered.

When this woman fled from her husband years before, she left this son behind her.

After roaming about for some time in America, she went back to England to see this son.

Believing that her husband was dead, she became the wife of the actor, whose name she now bore, and she endeavored to prevail on Con to accompany her to America.

That young scamp would not listen to this proposal, as he was infatuated with the gay and lawless life he led in London.

The anxious mother feared that he was on the high road to ruin; and now her worst fears were realized, for she knew that he had murdered his kind-hearted, generous uncle, as well as the cousin who had followed on his trail.

Con's young sister did not know her brother, as she had not seen him for years; and the young girl had not the least suspicion that he was on board the steamer.

Jane Williams, the country cousin, mourned for Dick as one lost forever; and many a tear did she shed for the handsome young fellow.

When the steamer was three days out at sea, some of her machinery became disarranged.

The captain fumed at this fresh annoyance, while some of the superstitious sailors muttered predictions of far graver evils in store.

On the fifth night the passengers and crew were aroused by the dreaded cry of "Fire—fire!"

The brave captain and his officers endeavored to stay the progress of the flames, and at the same time restore order among the panic-stricken passengers.

Cadger Con was one of the first to gain the deck when the alarm was raised; and it was well for him, that, in the great excitement, no one paid much attention to the old Irish woman and her daughter.

Fiercer and fiercer roared the flames; and the captain, despairing of saving the steamer, has ordered out the boats.

Among the first to spring into one of them were the disguised murderers.

Then loud cries of joy burst out from the captain and his officers when they beheld a large steamer bearing down on them.

On the deck of that steamer stood Dick Bacon and Denny Lane.

"I told you," cried Denny, as he gazed on the burning ship, "I told you, Dick, that the *Circassian* would never get to New York. That's her, sure."

"We're in time to save all the passenger, and the crew," returned Dick. "See—see! they're putting out into the boats now. Look out for the wretches now. 'Tis little they'll dream of seeing us here."

"Oh, faith! but we'll take a start out of the dirty scoundrels. There goes our boats to help them now. And we'll soon have a double cargo on board," said Denny.

By the bright glare from the ill-fated steamer the two lads could see the approaching boats.

With eager eyes and trembling hearts, they stood at the gangway, and watched the passengers of the burning steamer as they were received on board the *Asia*.

"There's the ould woman and her sick daughter that was in the next berth to us, Dick," cried Denny, as he pointed to the disguised murderers.

"And there's Jane in the same boat," said Dick. "Oh, won't she be glad to see me again?"

"Don't show yourself now, man," said Denny; "you'd take a great start out of her."

"That's true," returned Dick. "I'll wait un-

til to-morrow. Watch close for the murderers now, Denny."

"Well, gran," cried Denny, as he stared at the old Irish woman and her daughter, who had just reached the deck, "you had a narrow escape."

The pretended woman stared at Dick and Denny in turn, and then uttering a cry of terror, she seized the arm of her companion and dragged her away.

"The ould woman takes us for ghosts, Dick," said Denny. "Faith, but we must keep in the dark. I forgot that I mustn't come to the fore now, or the new-comers will expose me as a stowaway."

"Sammy—Sammy," muttered Cadger Con between his teeth, as they stood at the other side of the vessel, and watched the two young lads, "we didn't cook their goose after all. We must get down below at once, or we're lost. Heavens and earth, Sammy! see that fellow standing behind Dick. If it isn't his father's ghost again, I'm dreaming."

Sammy looked in the direction pointed out, and sure enough, standing behind Dick, was the living image of the murdered man!

With trembling steps the haunted wretches stole away to the steerage.

Dick and Denny watched at their post until all the passengers of the ill-fated vessel were on board, but they saw nothing of the Lancashire lasses.

"I don't know what to make of it, Denny," said the English lad. "The murderers must have been on board of the *Circassian*."

"Are you on the lookout for murderers, my lad?" inquired a voice behind him.

Dick looked around, as he uttered a cry of astonishment, and then he fell back on the deck insensible.

"What's the matter, Dick?" cried Denny, as he bent over his friend. "Oh, Lord! I must get him down below, or the ould capting will see me."

"Is that lad's name Dick Bacon?" inquired the old gentleman who was the cause of the lad's agitation.

"I believe it is, sir," replied Denny.

"Then I'm his uncle," returned the stranger.

"Faith, but he took ye for a ghost, sir," said Denny; "and 'tis a ghost he'll be himself if ye frighten him any more."

CHAPTER X.

DENNY'S WAY OF BREAKING THE NEWS GENTLY—A SLIGHT DISTURBANCE—MUTUAL EXPLANATIONS—THE FEARS OF THE GUILTY—DENNY LANE IN CLOVER—HE RESOLVES TO PLAY DETECTIVE.

WHEN Dick Bacon opened his eyes again, he was lying in a state-room, and Denny Lane was by his side.

"Where am I, Denny?" he cried.

"Begorra, you're in clover, and so am I," was Denny's reply.

"Who put me here, Denny?"

"The ghost, to be sure, Dick. And be all that's holy, he's the finest ghost I ever met."

"Did they catch the murderers yet?" inquired Dick, as he remembered the watch on deck the night before.

"He's after 'em now, Dick."

"Who?"

"The ghost, to be sure. Oh, faith but he's the lad to find 'em, if they're above water."

"Denny, you'll drive me mad," cried Dick, as he stared at the Irish lad. "Stop your nonsense, and talk common sense, if you can. What has happened? I don't remember anything since I fainted last night. I saw the ghost of my father the third time, Denny."

"Faith, so did I," cried the provoking Irish lad. "And me blessings on him, may I see him day and night, forever an' ever."

"Confound you for an Irish fool!" exclaimed Dick, as he sprang out of his berth. "If you don't stop your chaff and nonsense, I'll give you the best thrashing you ever got in your life."

Denny gave Dick a look, in which contempt and humor were mingled, as he replied:

"Begor, you won't, me young bantam."

"Why won't I, you confounded Irish bog trotter?" cried Dick, as he held up his hand to strike his friend.

"Because, in the first place, ye're not able to fight a cat now; and, secondly, ye're not fit to bate me the best day ye ever war."

"I'll thrash the life out of you, you Irish fool!" yelled Dick, as he struck Denny in the face.

"Blood an' 'ouns!" cried Denny, as he let fly at his assailant. "The ghost told me to break

it to ye gently, an' I'll do it, if I war to hammer the life out of ye. There now, bad cess to ye, will ye ever behave yerself?"

Dick, in his exhausted state, was no match for the hardy Irish lad, and in less time than we take to tell of the encounter he was overpowered and flung back on the berth.

"Bad luck to ye," cried Denny, as he held him down by both arms, "won't ye let me break the news gently?"

"Hold—hold!" cried a voice at the door. "What the mischief are you doing, you Irish fool?"

"Breaking it to him gently, of course, as you tould me, sir," returned Denny. "But, bad luck to him, if he didn't turn on me for doing it."

Dick looked up and there stood the old gentleman whom he had taken for his father's ghost.

"Let go—let go, you fool!" cried the old gentleman. "I was the fool to trust this business to you."

"And begor!" cried Denny, "I was the born fool to take any such job. If he was able, 'tis killed intirely I'd be by this time."

"Who are you, sir?" cried Dick, as he sat up and stared at the old man.

"Why, Dick, my lad, I'm your uncle—Uncle Richard, from Australia."

"That's what I was breaking to you gently, Dick," cried Denny, "only ye wouldn't hear to me. 'Tis yer father's brother, and not his ghost."

"Then 'twas you saved my life in the hotel at Liverpool, sir?" inquired Dick.

The truth was flashing on Dick's mind, as he remembered the conversation on the fatal Christmas night.

"So it appears, my lad," returned the old gentleman. "I had no idea who you were at the time. I only landed in Liverpool that day; and I did not even hear of your poor father's death."

"That's what I was to brake gently to him," interrupted Denny.

"I started up for London that night, and it was there that I heard of the murder, and of your going in search of the murderers."

"The very words that I was going to brake."

"Hush, Denny!" cried Dick, as he listened eagerly to his uncle's explanation. "Hush, or I'll break your head."

"Begor, you won't, for you're not able," returned the Irish lad. "I would be bitter for ye to resarve yer hard knocks for the divils we're after."

"You're right, Denny," said Dick, as he reached out his hand to the "stowaway." "Forgive me for hitting you at all. I'll never forget that you saved my life."

"There's no harm done, Dick," returned the impulsive Irish lad. "Now listen 'till the old gentleman brakes the news to ye. He can do it almost as well as I could myself."

The uncle smiled at the Irish boy, as he continued:

"When I heard the sad story from your mother, Dick, I resolved to start out after you at once, and assist you in bringing those rascals to justice."

"And I broke the news to the ould gentleman, Dick," interposed the irrepressible Denny, "how they sarved us in Cork harbor, and all the rest."

"Did you break the news to him, Denny," cried Dick, with a sly smile, "that you were a stowaway on the *Circassian*, and the rest of the story?"

"Bedad, but I did."

"Yes—yes," said Dick's uncle, "this friend of yours has told me everything that happened since you left Liverpool, and I have spoken to the two captains about him, as well as settled for his passage here in the cabin with you."

"Begor, 'tis livin' in clover now intirely, Dick," cried Denny, "and I'll go bail we'll find the born fiends before long at that."

Dick's hand was clasped in his uncle's while this conversation was going on, and he was regarding the old gentleman with the deepest attention.

"It's no wonder," thought the lad, "that I thought it was my father's ghost. He's like him in face, and voice, and action. Oh, dear, I hope he does not know that it was his own bad son that killed father."

That was what troubled Dick now.

"Speaking of those wretches, Dick," said the uncle, "would you know them if you came across them again?"

"I would, sir."

Then Dick felt relieved, for he knew that his

uncle was under the impression that the murderers were strangers.

"If we can only kill them," thought the lad, "poor uncle will never know who the murderer was. The knowledge of it would break his heart."

Then uncle and nephew, with Denny Lane as a confidant, held a long consultation about the murderers, and the best means to be adopted for their capture.

Richard Bacon, the uncle, was a thorough-going man of the world, and one who had fought his way to fortune in the Australian mines.

He was terribly embittered against the murderers, and nothing less than their extermination would satisfy him.

As Dick listened to the old gentleman's determined expressions, and thought that his uncle was resolved on hunting down his own son, he felt that they were on a terrible mission indeed.

While the lad studied the character of the old Australian, and heard his expressions of love for the murdered brother, Dick also realized that, if his uncle were informed of the whole truth, he would still pursue the murderers to the death.

"My whole aim now," thought Dick, "next to punishing Cadger Con and his companion, must be to keep from uncle the fact that he is hunting down his own son, and 'tis fortunate that I did not tell any one that the rascal was my cousin. I don't think I told Denny."

It is little the lad imagined that his secret was known to another on board that ship.

He did not dream, and how could he? that Cadger Con's mother and sister were now his fellow-passengers.

What a strange freak fate, or fortune, was playing at that time.

On board of that steamer was assembled the runaway wife, and her daughter, all unconscious of the husband's presence.

That woman knew that her guilty son was on board, and that his cousin was on his track.

Cadger Con was now aware that Dick Bacon was on his trail once more; but he had no knowledge, as yet, that his father had joined him in the chase.

The old Australian was bent on hunting down the murderers of his beloved brother, little dreaming that his own son was the principal criminal.

This man returned to England with the purpose of seeing his friends and home once more.

He longed to find the son and daughter who had been lost to him so long.

And it must be confessed that he desired to punish the woman who had deserted him so basely in his hour of misfortune.

But the warder had not the remotest idea of the whereabouts of his wife and children.

Cadger Con was in hourly dread of discovery.

He feared that his mother would betray him, for he knew that she had recognized him in the cabin.

He dreaded Dick Bacon's vengeful eye, and he upbraided himself for not having sunk a knife in him while lying on the bed in the Liverpool lodging-house.

The guilty wretch was haunted by the presence of the old man who bore such a striking resemblance to his murdered uncle; and as old Richard Bacon did not travel under his own name, his son had no means of discovering his relationship.

But, more than all, Cadger Con feared Denny Lane, the poor "stowaway."

When the disguised wretches sneaked away to the steerage, and found an empty berth whereon to rest, Cadger Con's first whisper to his companion was:

"Sammy—Sammy, I'm afraid our goose is cooked. Did you ever see such a go as Dick and that blasted Irishman being on this steamer?"

"But they didn't know us, Cadger," was the assuring reply. "We can work the game yet."

"Not a word," returned Con. "We could pull the wool over Dick's eyes, and I don't think mother will turn on me; but, I tell you, I'm afraid of that Irish fellow. He'll be on the lay for us now."

"Then we'll have to lay him out, Cadger."

"We'll try, Sam, we'll try. Confound it all, but things look blacker for us every day. We'll have to cook that Irish fellow's goose."

"That's the ticket, Cadger. I'll turn over now and take a sleep."

"Confound you, Sleepy Sam," said Cadger. "you'd sleep if the rope was around your neck."

"Very soon after," returned the other.

"Well, sleep, and be blowed to you. I'll try to think how we'll fix this Irishman."

And Denny's enemy worked his brain for some plan to get rid of him.

All unconscious of the terrible enmity and

fear he had created, the poor "stowaway" was now the merriest dog on board that steamer.

Denny Lane had succeeded in securing a free passage to the "green fields of America," and in the cabin among the "quality," at that.

He had secured the friendship of Dick and his wealthy uncle, whose confidant he now became.

And he had a grand mission before him in searching for the murderers.

"Begor, sir," Denny cried, addressing Mr. Bacon, "if I don't find the blackguards, ye may find me adrift in the broad ocean. I'll lay me hands on 'em, barring they're in league with Ould Nick intirely, which would give them the power to turn themselves into any shape."

"How will you set about it, Denny?" inquired Dick; "you must let me help you."

"Let me go skil'mishing on me own account first, Dick, and when I git scint of them, 'twill be time enough for me to raise the cry, and bring ye all down to the taking of the brush."

"You are an old huntsman, Denny," said Mr. Bacon, as he smiled at the droll Irish lad.

"I often hunted the fox and the hare, sir, but I never was after such cunning thieves as them afore. But there's something tells me that I'll pay them back for that dirty trick yet. Though, be the holy farmer, 'twas a lucky ducking for me."

"If you succeed in finding those murderers, Denny," said Mr. Bacon, "I will give you five hundred pounds, and I will be your friend for life."

"Bedad, sir, but I'll be made intirely then. Hoorah! but 'twas the lucky day for me that I missed the other ship at Liverpool. I'll find for every mother's sowl I know in ould Ireland, and will start a new town in America, and call it Bacontown, in honor of yourself and Dick here, more power to you."

"Stowawaytown would be better, Denny," said Dick.

"Arrah now, Dick, be aisy about that, will ye?" cried Denny. "Sure, I'm a full cabin passenger now; though, begor, if I am, I'll spend most of me time in the steerage."

CHAPTER XI.

DENNY LANE'S "CONSIDERATION CAP"—"GREEK MEETS GREEK"—THE TRUE AND THE FALSE—DENNY SEEKS AN ALLY—SLATHERING ON THE BROGUE—DENNY'S DISGUISE FOR THE NIGHT.

THOUGH the captain of the *Circassian* was very despondent at the loss of his vessel, he expressed himself as much relieved at the knowledge that Dick was alive.

He had not thought of Denny Lane at all.

The brave man was the last to leave the burning steamer; and when he did at length spring into the boat, his mind was troubled with the question:

"Did the murderers escape?"

On the following morning he held a long consultation with the captain of the *Asia* and Mr. Bacon; and it was resolved between them that they would leave the matter of hunting the murderers in Denny Lane's hands, for some time, at least.

The captain of the ill-fated ship, it will be remembered, had taken a great fancy to the poor stowaway, and in this feeling Mr. Bacon shared.

So it was determined to let Denny "have his fling."

Denny now "struts the deck" as large as life, rigged up in whatever clothes Mr. Bacon could procure for him.

A good revolver was in the lad's pocket, and in his hand he carried a heavy stick.

"I must put on me 'considerin' cap' now," he muttered, as his keen eye was directed on the steerage passengers who were loitering on the deck. "Denny Lane—Denny Lane, ye have the finest chance a poor gorsoon ever had, and may the Ould Boy fly away with ye if ye don't bate them blackguards and make yer fortune to boot."

At that moment the lad's eyes fell on the form of the pretended old Irishwoman, who was standing by the door of the steerage.

"There's old gran," muttered the lad; "bedad, I'll go and have a talk with her."

Before Denny could reach the old creature she retreated down the steerage.

"She doesn't want to let on she knows me," muttered Denny, "for fear she'd get me into trouble. The poor old creature takes me for a stowaway yet."

Then Denny started as if struck with a bright idea.

"Begor," he muttered, "but she's just the one to help me to find the villains. Why didn't I think of that before? And be the powers of Moll

Kelly, but she can do more than that for me. Hould on, Denny Lane, hould on. Ye're getting too much in yer cranium at once. Stop awhile, an' look afore ye jump, man."

Sticking his hands in his pockets, our young Irish philosopher strode up and down the deck for some moments, and in the meantime, as he would himself express it, he was "doing a power of thinking."

"I'll do it, begob," he muttered, at length. "If I don't do any good, I can't do much harm. Ah, Denny Lane—Denny Lane, but we'll show them yet that the penny a week wasn't lost on yer education."

Slapping his hat on the side of his head, the bold Irish lad walked towards the steerage.

"I'll spake Irish to her," he muttered, as he descended into the steerage. "We can make it up together in the ould tongue, and if the divils themselves war listening, they can't make out what we're up to."

The disguised murderer was sitting near the center of the compartment when Denny entered, and he was in the act of whispering to his companion when his keen eye discovered that the Irish lad was approaching.

Sleepy Sam was lying on the berth, half asleep, as usual.

"Here comes that Irish fool, Sam," said Cadger, as he held down his head.

"You talk to him, Cadger," returned his companion. "He can't find out anything here in this dark place, and I'll take another sleep."

"Confound you, Sam," whispered Cadger Con. "You just keep your eye open. I may want you to help me to cook his goose, and by God, I'll do it, if—mum's the word."

It did not take Denny Lane long, even in the dim light, to get the location of the young scamp.

With a careless, free-and-easy way, he approached the pretended old woman, and to Cadger Con's great surprise, addressed him in a familiar way, and in the Irish tongue.

"Cunna sthan thu, shanavan?" ("How are you, old woman?")

An unintelligible grunt from Cadger Con was the only reply to this question.

"Thiggen thu Galic, shanavan?" ("Do you understand Irish, old woman?") was Denny's next question.

Another grunt from Cadger Con.

"The old woman must be dafé," muttered Denny, "for it can't be possible that the likes of her don't understand the old tongue. 'Bedad, I'll try her in English.'"

The cunning Cadger understood at once the predicament in which he was placed.

Of course he didn't understand a word of Irish.

"Blast the feller," he thought, "I must play a sharp game with him now, or we're gone."

"Don't ye understand Irish?" cried Denny, in a louder voice. "Or are ye dafé, poor creature?"

Now it must be remembered that this versatile rascal had seen and mixed with the Irish population of London, and he could assume the brogue to perfection.

He was also aware that Irish was not spoken in many sections of the country; and that the mere fact, therefore, of his being ignorant of the language, would not be liable to expose him, provided he carried out his assumed character in other respects.

"I don't spake a word of Irish," he replied, in a low voice. "An' I'm not hard of hearing at all."

"Can't spake a word of Irish at all!" cried Denny, in apparent astonishment. "Irre, what part of the ould land did ye come from at all?"

"From Cork," was the reply.

"From Cork!" cried Denny. "Bad luck to ye—sure that's where I come from meself. And ye mane to tell me ye can't spake Irish?"

"We was a long time in England," replied Con.

And oh, how the young scamp cursed Denny mentally.

"Faith, but I'd be in England forever afore I'd be forgettin' or be ashamed of my own language."

"What's yer name, ma'am, if I may make so bold! Ye may call me Denny—Denny Lane, ma'am; a good ould stock, if I do say it meself."

"Donovan is me name, Denny."

"It ought to be O'Donovan, ma'am," said Denny. "But I suppose that's some more of yer English fashion—dropping the ould Irish prefix."

"Maybe so, my lad," returned Cadger Con, as the perspiration welled out from every pore.

"Well, that's nayther here nor there, Mrs. Donovan," continued Denny, in an undertone. "I want to spake a few words to you in saycret, ma'am. Who's that in the berth? Oh, 'tis yer daughter."

"Ay, Denny; and she's bad with say-sickness yet. She's sleeping now."

"Can ye keep a great saycret, ma'am?" inquired Denny, as he stooped down and regarded the pretended old woman with a stern countenance.

"I could, Denny."

"Could ye give a gorsoon a lift to make his fortune, and at the same time be doing a sarvice to God be punishing born devils?"

"To be sure I could, Denny."

"Well, then, listen to me. Whisper. 'Tis a pity you don't understand Irish, for I wouldn't want the boards of the ship to hear what I'm saying."

"I'm listening, Denny."

"Ye hear tell about the murdering villains that was aboard the other ship, an' that's now hiding on this, fixed up in some way that we can't make them out."

"I've heard of them, Denny."

"Well, then, I'm going to catch them villains, and I want you to help me. And, bedad, if I succeed, and I know I will, but I'll give ye five pounds."

"How will I help ye, Denny?"

"In the first place, I want ye to keep yer eyes and ears open, and tell me if you see anything queer about any of the people down here. D'ye mind now?"

"I do, Denny."

"In the next place, I want ye to give me the loan of some of yer ould clothes."

"What for, Denny?"

"Why, I want to put them on, of course, and come down here pretending I'm an ould woman, so that the cunning blackguards won't know me. They know me now, bad luck to them. And I don't know but their eyes is on me this very minit."

"You're right, you blasted fool!" thought Cadger Con, as he glared from under the hood at his foe. "And their hands will soon be on you."

"Now, then, shanavan," continued Denny, "I want you to give the loan of one of yer ould frocks and caps, and the other utensils to make me into an old gran like yerself. I'll give them all back to ye agin, and I won't forget the five pounds I promised ye."

"The devil a stitch did we bring with us from the burning ship," returned Cadger Con, "only what we have on our backs, Denny, agra."

"Oh, bad cess to me," cried Denny, in a loud voice. "I didn't think of that at all. Howsumever, you'll do as I bid ye, won't ye, shanavan!"

"Indeed I will, Denny."

And then the Irish lad bent his mouth to her ear once more, and gave the villain a description of himself and Sam, as they appeared as Lancashire lasses.

"Keep your eye open, gran," said Denny, at parting, "and I'll be down here to-night in such a rig that my own mother won't know me, much less the blackguards I'm watching."

The disguised scamp promised to comply with this request, and then Denny left him.

"That game was well played, Sam," whispered Cadger Con, as he saw Denny going through the steerage with a careless swagger.

"Oh, yes," returned the sleepy individual. "'Twas as good as play-acting, and better on his part."

"What do you mean, Sam?" inquired Cadger, in an anxious whisper. "Do you think that Irish bloke saw through our little game?"

"Certain he did."

"Nonsense, Sam."

"He was guying you all the time, Cadger."

"Stuff, Sammy. You were asleep, and you couldn't see or hear anything."

"I had one eye open, Cadger," said Sam, in a tremulous whisper, "and I saw the merry twinkle of that bloke's peepers when he spoke in the Irish jargon. The Irish cooked our goose, Cadger."

"I don't believe it, Sam."

"Wait and see, then. We can't do anything else, unless we jump overboard."

"Blast my eyes," hissed Cadger Con, "if that Irish beggar is going to squelch me. If it comes to the worst—that is, if he has discovered this lay—we can play another game."

"Of course we can, Cadger; I'll turn over and take another sleep."

"I can't believe the bloke has found us out," muttered Cadger Con. "If he had, he'd have shown his hand at once, for he couldn't hold in."

I'll keep my eyes peeled, anyway, and see what disguise he'll take. 'Tis a rum joke, his coming to me for help. Pshaw! Sam, the fellow is as stupid as a country clown."

Denny Lane strolled up on deck, and then into the cabin where Dick and his uncle were waiting to hear a report of his first visit to the steerage.

"Well, Denny," said Mr. Bacon, "how do you prosper down below? Any clew yet?"

As the gentleman spoke, he looked earnestly at the amateur detective.

Denny's face was very calm, and there was not a twinkle in his merry eye, as he replied:

"I had a talk with an ould countryman of mine, sir, down below, and I'm a thinking something will come of it afore long. I must go down to-night agin, and disguised at that, sir."

"What disguise will you adopt, Denny?" inquired Dick, as a smile stole over his face, at the thought of the droll Irish lad assuming any disguise. "Your brogue will betray you at once."

"Me brogue, is it, Dick?" cried Denny. "Ha-ha-ha! Oh! but 'tis quare that I can't get rid of it at all. Well—well, there's one consolation I have anyway. *Me brogue is natural*, at all ivints."

"How is that going to help you, Denny?" inquired Mr. Bacon. "What do you mean by laying such stress on the expression that your brogue is natural?"

"Oh! nothing much, sir, at all," replied Denny, with a droll smile. "I was only thinking of an ould story me poor mother used to tell, and it comes to me mind now when Dick spoke of the brogue."

"Let's hear it, Denny," said Dick.

"Well," returned Denny, "as it won't take a minit I'll tell it to ye; and I want ye to remember it hereafter."

"Go on, Denny," said Mr. Bacon, who enjoyed the humor of the Irish lad.

"Well, sir," commenced Denny, "there was a widow man in the town where I was reared, and he had three young children. And what should he do but bring them home another mother one fine morning."

"Of course the childer were on the tip-toe to see how the step-mother would treat 'em, for the poor things always heard a bad account of such people, and they expected to be starved alive with hunger for ever an' a day."

"To their great surprise and delight, the first night their stepmother gives them plenty of bread and butter, and milk, and the poor cratures went to bed with light hearts, and blessings on their lips for their new mother, all save one."

"When they was all lying in the bed, the little ones commenced to praise the stepmother, till the biggest boy, who was a cunning chap, put a stop to them, be saying:

"'Hould yer whist, will ye, and don't ye be making donkeys of yerselves; ye'll have a different story to tell afore long."

"What ails ye, Paddy?" inquired his brother; "sure, didn't she give us lashings of bread and fine butter?"

"I know she did," said Paddy, "an' that's what rose me suspicions. She wasn't natural to-night at all, for she *slathered the butter on too thick*."

"And, sure enough," continued Denny, "Paddy's stepmother turned out to be the devil intirely."

"I don't see the point of your story, Denny," said Mr. Bacon, "as applied to the rascals we're looking for."

"Maybe there isn't any point to it, sir," said Denny. "But it was while speaking of the brogue and disguises that you put me in mind of it."

"How is that, Denny? Do explain yourself," said Mr. Bacon, growing more interested in Denny's conversation.

"Why, you see, sir," said the lad, "it struck me that it's a foolish thing for people to be trying to play parts, when they can't be natural. Whin-ever I see any of them play-actors, or them jay-nuses that writes the stories, clapping on the brogue, just as if they had a prater stuck in their mouth all the time, and more especially when they puts on the blarney, I says to myself: 'That's not natural, for he's *slathering on the butter too thick*.'"

The keen eye of the Australian was fixed on Denny, as he took his hand and said:

"Denny, you've made a discovery. I can see that at once. Well, go on in your own way, my lad. When the time comes, you will let us know all about it. So we will not trouble you now."

"He's trying to break the news gently to us, uncle," cried Dick.

"Lave me alone, Dick," returned Denny. "If I break the news to ye at all, 'twill come like a

clap of thunder, and no mistake. But I must go now, and think about me disguise."

"Can't I help you, Denny?" inquired Dick.

"No—no," cried the Irish lad, "I've taken this job on contract. And if I don't succeed, I won't ask ye to give me a dacent wake even."

Denny turned away, and he had reached the cabin door, when he came back, and said in a low voice:

"Remember that ye must all lave me alone, no matter what I do. There's no telling yet what disguise I may be in."

"You are your own master, Denny," returned Mr. Bacon. "I will see that no one interferes with you."

"No matter what I do, sir?"

"No matter what you do, Denny."

"Thin I'll raise Ballyhooly down below to-night, or me name's not Denny Lane. I'm going to get as drunk as a piper, sir."

"Get as drunk as a lord, if you like, Denny," returned Mr. Bacon, with a knowing smile.

CHAPTER XII.

DENNY LANE ON A SPREE—HE TREATS THE TWO SCAMPS—DICK DISCOVERS THE MORAL OF DENNY'S STORY—WAITING FOR THE ONSET.

Down in the steerage that night, Cadger Con and Sleepy Sam waited anxiously for the appearance of Denny Lane.

"I wonder in what disguise the Irish bloke will come, Sam," said Cadger, "if he comes at all?"

"There he is now," returned the sleepy one. "And, blow me, if he's not as drunk as a fool."

"Oh, Sam—Sam!" hissed Cadger, "if we don't cook his goose now, we're a pair of mutton-heads. Watch your points now, old fellow."

Down the stairs tumbled Denny Lane, and along the passage, reeling and tossing like a half-drunken man, and right at his heels came Dick Bacon.

"Denny—Denny, you fool," cried Dick, as he seized his friend by the arm, "come back into the cabin, and go to sleep. You'll get into a row down here. And, Denny, remember that our enemies' eyes may be on you."

Dick's last words were uttered in a low voice.

"To the devil I pitch the whole box and dice of ye," cried Denny, as he flung Dick aside. "Go up to your cabin an' yer quality, and lave me alone here with me own dacent people from Cork. Irra, Mrs. O'Donovan, how's every inch of ye at all? And how's the poor colleen with the sea-sickness?"

Putting on the brogue as thick as possible, Cadger Con replied:

"Sure, Denny, an' she only poorly entoirly."

"And bedad, then, Mrs. Donovan," said Denny, as he staggered against the old woman, with a bottle in his hand, "'tis I brought ye something that will warm the cockles of yer ould heart. Here's a bottle of Wise's whiskey, ma'am; and—will ye lave me alone, Dick, af ye don't want to fall out with me? Don't I tell you I want to spend the night with the dacent woman here and her daughter?"

"Come—come, Denny," cried Dick, "this won't do, Denny. Remember what we have in hand. The captain won't allow you down here now."

"Go up to the captain," cried Denny, "an' give him my blessing, and take it yourself. Then kape it there among ye, and don't bring it back to me 'till I send for ye. D'ye mind that now?"

"I won't leave you, Denny," returned Dick, as he glanced around the apartment. "I know you'll get into trouble, if I do."

"Stay where ye are, then; but hold yer whist while I'm talking to these dacent people. *Slantha*, Mrs. Donovan. Oh, begor, but I forgot you didn't spake Irish."

As Denny spoke he put the bottle to his mouth, and took a long pull at it.

"I drink first, ma'am, to show ye it's the rale stuff. Don't be afeerd of it, ma'am; 'tis as mild as milk."

Denny handed the bottle to Cadger Con, who was compelled to swallow some of the liquor, although it occurred to him at the time that the stuff was drugged.

"Pass it to your daughter, ma'am," said Denny. "We won't give a drop to this Sassenach here; he's no stomach for good liquor."

The bottle was next handed to Sleepy Sam; and that young scamp, after he had tasted the liquor, did not seem to be at all afraid of it.

In the meantime, Denny sat down near the old woman, and commenced to rattle away at a furious rate.

"Oh, but 'tis I'm in clover, intirely, Mrs.

Donovan. And, whisper here; did ye see anything of the blackguards I was telling ye of?"

"No, Dinny."

"Ah, bad cess to 'em; I won't bother with them any more. Let them do their own dirty work. Sing us a song, Mrs. Donovan, and more power to you. Pass around the whiskey again."

"I can't sing, Dinny," replied Cadger Con, who did not dare attempt anything of the kind.

"Be the holy farmer, then," cried Denny, "but I'll rattle off one for ye, and 'tis a song I composed meself, too, in honor of the land we're going to."

And the next moment the Irish lad raised his voice to its highest pitch, as he sang the following words:

"Then here's to Columbia, the land I'm going to,
My blessings on her green hills, and on her skies
so blue;
May peace and plenty ever reign upon her smiling shore,
And may her sons and daughters have riches in galore."

"Then here's to George Washington, the noble
and brave,
May Heaven be his dwelling-place, and Paradise
his grave;
And here's to General Jackson, the hero stout
and bold,
May Saint Peter have his honored name among
the bless'd enrolled."

"But I won't forget my own land, old Erin, *grá machree*;
My blessing e'er be with you, dear island of the
sea;
I can't forget my old friends, er the colleen I
adore,
Oh, God be with the time we roamed upon Dun-
woorley's shore."

"Then here's to you, ould Ireland, when I am far
away,
'Tis every night I'll dream of you, and think of
you by day;
And if your flag e'er waves again upon the bat-
tle plain,
The last to rush back to its side won't be poor
Denny Lane."

The Irish lad took the bottle again, and the tears were falling from his eyes as he raised it to his lips.

Some of the Irish passengers in the steerage cheered Denny's song, while Cadger Con cursed him mentally.

Dick Bacon endeavored to coax Denny away out of the steerage once more; but his efforts were of no avail.

Denny was tipsy before, and he was now becoming stupidly drunk.

He complimented Mrs. Donovan on the "beautiful English" she had picked while sojourning in the sister country, and expressed his regret that she couldn't understand the Irish.

Sleepy Sam had an eye on Denny all the time, and, for the life of him, he couldn't tell whether the lad's drunkenness was real or assumed.

The wily scamp commenced to think that he had been mistaken in his views, and he congratulated himself on the fact that Denny had not penetrated through their disguises.

Again and again did Denny pass around the bottle; and Dick Bacon's face was the picture of agony as he saw that his friend was becoming quite helpless.

And, oh, how Cadger Con and Sleepy Sam gloated over the prospect of an easy victory over him.

"For Heaven's sake, Denny," said Dick Bacon, at last, "do come up to the cabin with me."

"Go to the ould Nick, ye English buddach," growled the Irish lad, as he staggered across to an empty berth. "I'll not go up—hic—among yer quality—hic—this blessed night; lave me alone—hic—will ye?"

Then Denny flung himself into the berth; and in two minutes he was snoring away.

Dick was in a fix.

He did care to go back and tell his uncle about Denny, for he had received strict instructions that the lad was to have his own way.

He could not leave him alone, as he feared that ill would befall him, while in that helpless state.

"I'll stretch here beside him," muttered the lad. "I can't desert the poor fellow, after he has saved my life."

It was quite late now, and most of the passengers had retired to rest, but the pretended Irish woman still sat by the side of the berth, conversing in whispers with Sleepy Sam.

The berth into which Denny had flung himself was just opposite that occupied by the two scamps.

As Dick lay there, he felt Denny's hand pressed gently on his own, and though the snoring was kept up as heavily as ever, the Irish lad whispered in his ear:

"Did I put on too thick, Dick, or was it natural?"

"Ain't you drunk, then, Denny?" was the cautious reply. "What are you up to?"

"Wait, and you'll see. Watch that ould woman and her daughter. When you see them coming to this place here, have your pistol ready, and do as I bid ye."

"Do you mean the old Irish woman, Denny?"

"Of course I do."

"But what have we to do with them, man?"

"That ould Irishwoman and her daughter is Cadger Con and his comrade."

Dick's heart beat violently as he said: "You don't say that, Denny. How did you discover them? are you sure?"

"How did I discover them, is it? D'ye mind the story I told ye this morning?"

And the Irish lad kept on his snoring during this whispered conversation.

"I do, Denny."

"Well, then, ye have my saycret. Cadger Con put on the brogue too thick. He isn't natural. Wait now a while, and see if them five hundred pounds isn't mine. And keep a bold heart, for ye'll need it to-night, if ye want to avenge your father."

"I'm ready, Denny," replied Dick. "And you're a rouser."

"And ye thought I was drunk all the time I was at them, eh?" inquired Denny.

"To be sure I did. I could have sworn to it. So you were only shamming all the time."

"I was disguised," returned the Irish lad, as he pressed the hand of his friend. "Only disguised, Dick; but I was afraid I might be putting it on too thick."

"Twas very natural, Denny."

"Ah, Dick, me boy, let this be a lesson to ye forever; and remember what my ould school-master used to tell us, and that was, that there's no difference much between rale jaynius and rale nature. I suppose 'tis as natural for me to act being drunk as 'tis to spake the brogue. But Cadger Con put it on too thick, and he put his foot into it when he had me to deal with. Now, watch the divils, for we've hot work afore us."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ASSASSINS AT WORK—A SURPRISE AND A FIGHT—DENNY LANE'S TRIUMPH—DICK BACON'S PERPLEXITY—CADGER CON RAISES ANOTHER COMMOTION.

By the dim light of the single lamp hanging in the steerage, Cadger Con and his companion watched the movements of their enemies.

Sleepy Sam was wide awake now.

There was work to be done, if their enemies were to be put out of the way, and it was necessary that they should consult as to the safest way of doing it.

They were both puzzled at the maneuvers of Denny Lane, and it was impossible for them to tell what his thoughts were in connection with them.

"The bloke wouldn't get drunk," argued Cadger Con, "if he saw through our game. I tell you what, Sam, I don't believe he suspects us at all. He couldn't go on as he does, if he saw, or thought, who we are. He's not deep enough for that. Oh, no! He'd let the cat out of the bag at once. We'd had the captain and officers after us before now."

"I don't know what to make of the Irish duffer," returned the sleepy one. "Hear how he snores. Cadger, the best lay for us is to put them out of the way at once. Dick is after us; and he's the only one on the vessel that knows us. We might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb. Let us work the chloroform lay on them, and then choke the wind out of them."

"Sammy, I go in for that racket," whispered Cadger Con. "We have a good chance to cook their goose. Whether that Irish fool knows us or not, I feel that he'll give us trouble. Wait till Dick is asleep—and then we'll be safe."

So they waited, and watched, and listened to Denny Lane's loud snoring, little dreaming of the weasel eyes that were fixed on them the while.

An hour passed away, and the two scamps heard Dick in a chorus of snoring with Denny.

Now was the time to strike the final blow at their inveterate enemies.

"They're coming at us now, Dick," whispered Denny, as he held his revolver ready for use. "Be ready, man; and, on your life, don't stir till I tell you."

"I won't, Denny."

"I'll have at the ould woman," continued Denny; "you rap at the other fellow."

Dick was pleased at this arrangement, for, as he thought of his kind uncle, he did not care to kill his cousin.

"Very well, Denny."

Like fiends of death, as they were, the two murderers stole towards the berth.

Cadger Con looked at Denny for a moment, as he whispered to his companion:

"I'll fix the Irish bloke. You 'tend to Dick. Are you ready now, Sammy?"

"Ready," was Sammy's reply.

Cadger Con was in the act of placing a cloth to Denny's nose, when his hand was suddenly grasped, and the next moment the gleaming barrel of the pistol was presented at his head.

"Be aisy, Mrs. Donovan," roared Denny, as he glared at his startled foe. "Dick, have at the other fellow."

Dick sprang out of bed and seized Sleepy Sam by the throat, while he placed his revolver at his head.

"Don't stir, Mrs. Donovan," cried Denny, "or I'll give ye the finest dose of lead ye ever had. Where's yer beautiful English now, ma'am? Faith, but I'll be after giving ye a lesson in Irish soon."

Cadger Con was dumbfounded for a moment, when he felt the iron grasp on his wrist, and saw the murderous weapon within an inch of his face.

The scamp realized at once that his life was in deadly peril; but, at the same time, it also flashed through his mind that death—an ignominious death—awaited him in any event.

Like the rat in a corner, he determined to fight his enemy to the last.

With a muttered oath he raised his right hand suddenly, and struck aside the pistol.

A loud report rang out through the ship, and then Sleepy Sam uttered a cry of pain, as he fell on the floor.

"Did I hit you, Dick?" roared Denny, as he struck his adversary in the face with the pistol.

"No, Denny," returned Dick; "you've struck this rascal here, and I've got him."

"Thanks for that," cried Denny. "Now, ye villain, here's at ye in earnest."

And Denny, disdaining to use his weapon again, or fearing that he would hit his friend, closed in on Cadger Con, and endeavored to force him to the floor.

In the meantime, Dick was holding down the wounded scamp, Sammy, who struggled fearfully.

Cadger Con was fighting for his life, and he was fighting for vengeance, for he had learned to hate the Irish lad most intensely.

The report from the pistol, and the shouts of the combatants, had aroused the passengers as well as alarmed the officers on deck, and in a very short time the latter hastened to the scene of the conflict.

"Don't come near us," cried Denny Lane, as the officers attempted to seize them. "Let us fight it out. I have the rascal narely bate now."

"I'll kill you yet!" hissed Cadger Con, as he grasped Denny's throat. "You Irish bloke, I'll murder you!"

"D'ye all hear what beautiful English he spakes now?" cried Denny, as he let fly at his enemy. "Don't touch us on your lives, captain; remember ye promised to let me have my own way."

With wondering eyes the captain and the officers stared at the combatants.

Dick had succeeded in conquering his wounded foe, and Sleepy Sam was now lying on the floor, with the hood and head-gear torn away.

The lanterns in the hands of the officers, threw a bright light on the scene.

There was Denny Lane pummeling away at the pretended old woman, whose head-gear and cloak were now lying on the floor.

The moment the captain arrived, he comprehended the situation, and, waving back the officers, he cried:

"Let the Irish lad alone; he wants to secure his prisoner. They have no weapons; let them fight it out."

"Captain, you're a jewel," cried Denny Lane; "sure I want to do something for me money. Take that, ye blackguard—ye murderer! Aha! I told ye ye were not able for Denny Lane."

"Brave lad!" cried the captain; "he's got him down?"

"And the wind out him at that!" said Denny, as he sat on Cadger Con's breast, and held him

by the throat. "I knew we'd bate them, Dick."

"What's all this?" cried the old Australian, as he stared at Denny and Dick. "Dear me, have the lads caught those wretches at last?"

"Let me make ye acquainted with Mrs. Donovan, from Cork, Mr. Bacon—be quiet, ye villain, and have manners," cried Denny, as he still held his conquered foe.

When Cadger Con heard Denny address Mr. Bacon, he gave a sudden start, and glared at the old gentleman.

"And, sir," continued Denny, as he pointed to Dick and his prisoner, "Dick, there, yer nephew—what ails ye, ye villain? be quiet, or I'll give ye another crack."

The latter part of Denny's speech was addressed to Cadger Con, who had started again on hearing Dick addressed as the nephew of the old gentleman.

"Dick there, sir," continued Denny, "will introduce ye to her daughter, and a fine bouncing lump of a girl she is."

"And are these the robbers—the murderers, Dick?" cried the old Australian.

"Yes, sir," replied Dick; "and it is to Denny, there, that all the credit is due for capturing them."

"Brave fellow," said the old gentleman.

Denny held down his head, and he actually blushed.

"How did you find out the scoundrels, lad?" inquired the captain of the ill-fated *Circassian*.

"Why, as I live, it's the old Irish woman that I examined before."

When Denny had overpowered Cadger Con, he placed the cap and head-dress on him again; and the captain recognized his old passenger at once.

"Yes, Denny," cried the old Australian, "tell us how you penetrated the disguise; why, it's most perfect."

"And the rascal spoke just like an old Irish woman, too," said the captain.

There was a merry twinkle, a broad smile on his face, as Denny replied:

"Ah, sir, the great trouble with this clever schemer was that he slathered on the brogue too thick. Do you understand me now, Mr. Bacon?"

"I do—I do!" cried the old Australian. "Why, captain, gentlemen, Denny's joke is capital. Denny, you must tell us the story when we get up in the cabin. Ha—ha—ha!"

And Mr. Bacon laughed heartily at the humor of the Irish lad.

How sad the old gentleman would have been at that moment if he knew that the scamp who was conquered by Denny was his own son.

Hearty congratulations were showered on Denny and Dick by the two captains and the officers; and after the prisoners were secured, the exultant lads were borne in triumph to the cabin.

Sleepy Sam had received a severe wound on the side, but Cadger was not much injured from Denny's blows.

"What a rum go this is?" muttered the scamp, when he found himself secured in the strong room. "Here's father back from Australia, and after me with Dick. He doesn't know me yet, either, that's certain."

Then the scamp pondered on his position.

He saw the gallows staring him in the face and no hope of escape before him, unless he could manage to give his enemies the slip.

"The game is not up yet," he muttered, as he glanced around the room; "and I won't give up without making a bold stroke for it. Ha! there's mother."

Then Cadger Con pondered long and seriously, and the more he pondered the firmer became his resolve to make a desperate attempt at escape.

Then he thought of Denny Lane, and vengeful were the vows he registered against him.

"I slathered the brogue on too thick, did I?" he muttered, as he gnashed his teeth with rage.

"Oh, if ever I get a fair chance, won't I slather that Irish bloke; I'll cut his heart out yet!"

In the cabin, Denny was the hero of the hour.

Mr. Bacon and the officers laughed heartily at the lad's detective experience; and more especially when he told them how he had spoken Irish to the disguised murderer.

When Dick and Denny retired to rest that night the English lad told his friend the secret of Cadger's connection with Mr. Bacon.

"Oh, murder in Irish!" cried Denny; "and you don't mean to tell me that the blackguard is your own first cousin, and the ould gentleman's son?"

"I do, Denny. And you must help me to keep the truth from uncle. It would drive him mad if he knew it."

"Why in the blazes, Dick," cried Denny, "didn't ye say that afore? Bad luck to me, if I

wouldn't let the blackguard go, bad as he is, if I thought 'twould trouble the ould gentleman."

"But he killed my father, Denny," returned Dick. "And I'll see him hanged, if he was my own brother."

"'Tis the devil's own quare work entirely," said Denny, as he rubbed his head. "It bates anything I ever heard tell of. Ye want to hang yer cousin, and ye don't want yer uncle to know it."

"I do, Denny. I hoped that we would kill the pair of them; and then uncle would have never known what a wretch his son was."

"Dick—Dick," cried Denny, "ye put yer foot in it, that ye didn't tell me that afore. 'Twould been an aisy matter to put some bullets in them when they war stealing on us a while ago. I don't like to have the murder of any one on me sowl, if I could help it; but I'd kill a dozen scamps like him to keep the dacent ould gentleman from sorrow or grief. Why didn't ye tell me, man?"

"I didn't think it necessary, Denny. It can't be helped now. But do try and think of some plan of keeping it from uncle."

"I'll try, Dick. I'll ruminate over it till morning at any rate."

Denny did ruminate over it; and before falling asleep he had concocted a plan for disposing of the prisoner without letting him breathe a word of his parentage.

There was a great excitement on board the *Asia* that night when the word was passed from mouth to mouth that two desperate murderers had been captured.

But greater still was the excitement, on the following morning, when it was discovered that Cadger Con had forced open the door of the strong room, and disappeared.

Then all was uproar and hurrying here and there, as the captain and his officers ran through the vessel looking for the escaped prisoner.

The boats were examined, and it was found that none were missing.

Every nook and corner in the ship was searched, barrels and boxes overhauled, and the coal tumbled aside, but Cadger Con could not be found.

The disappearance was a mystery to all, and his hiding-place was a greater mystery still.

"Begorra!" thought Denny Lane, "I'll bet five pounds the rascal took a swim for it. He preferred drowning to hanging; and they say 'tis the pleasantest death that one could die. Bad luck to him, for he circumvented the plan I had laid out for killing him."

Dick Bacon hoped that his rascally cousin had committed suicide by jumping overboard, and he felt relieved at the thought.

"Uncle will never know now," he muttered.

"I must warn Cousin Jane not to mention who Cadger Con was."

Sleepy Sam, as he lay wounded, under the care of the surgeon, heard of Cadger Con's escape, and a gleam of hope flashed over his mind.

"Cadger will beat them all yet," he muttered, "for he's a deep one. But he mustn't try the Irish dodge again while that young bloke is around. Won't we cook that fellow's goose if we ever get out of this ugly scrape?"

Dick's uncle was terribly excited over the prisoner's escape.

The old Australian swore that he would give half his fortune to see both murderers brought to the gallows.

"Begor," whispered Denny Lane to Dick, "but I'm thinking he'd give the other half to get one of them down again."

"You are mistaken, Denny," replied Dick. "Uncle would not spend a penny to save his life, even were he to know that he's his son. I believe he would hunt him down just as fiercely as ever."

"Bedad, then, but nature is a quare thing after all," returned the young Irish philosopher. "I couldn't have the heart to hunt me own child to the gallows, if he killed every born relation I had in the world and meself in the bargain."

Will be concluded in "Wide Awake Library," No. 274, entitled "The Rascal's Escape."

WASSERMANN REACTION—CORBUS

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YEARS' EXPERIENCE WITH THE WASSERMANN REACTION IN PRACTICE

ANALYTICAL REPORT ON FIFTY-SEVEN CASES TREATED FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE WASSERMANN REACTION *

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Years 1903, 1905 and 1907 each marks a definite advancement of our knowledge of syphilis.

Metchnikoff's and Roux's inoculation experiments on the higher apes in 1903 the scientific world renewed its efforts to discover, if possible, the cause of syphilis, and when Schaudinn and Hoffmann discovered the *Spirochæta pallida*, in 1905, the diagnosis of syphilitic lesions was placed on a definite basis.

Establishing of the *Spirochæta pallida* as the etiologic factor in syphilis has been fraught with much trouble because the discovery did not conform to the theories of the time. The work of Metchnikoff, Roux, and many others stands out in bold relief and the specificity of the *Spirochæta pallida* on so many occasions that, notwithstanding their inability to culture the organism, it is now accepted by syphilologists world over.

The complement-fixation test as discovered by Bordet and others, and elaborated by Wassermann, Neisser and others, has brought us in still closer relation with the disease. Like the *Spirochæta pallida*, it has its full share of criticism and condemnation, a part of which was due to imperfect technic and incomplete knowledge. That it is absolutely specific and of immense value is a conclusion that can be drawn from many reports that have appeared in the literature and the thousands of cases that have been exam-

patients. The findings confirm the specific importance of the test and show that energetic mercurial treatment is able to transform a positive into a negative reaction in a large proportion of cases.

A positive reaction was obtained in 23 out of 107 prostitutes with apparently no signs or history of syphilis.

Boas³ has applied the Wassermann test in 1,345 cases. He states that positive findings after systematic treatment of syphilis are invariably the precursors of a recurrence. The serum test applied once a month in the first years after infection, and the resumption of treatment in case of positive findings, will certainly have a marked influence in warding off recurring trouble.

Purkhauer⁴ reports from Neisser's clinic the findings of the Wassermann test as applied to 5,200 cases of syphilis. The findings were positive in inverse proportion to the number of intermittent courses of treatment that had been applied in the individual cases. The more energetic the treatment, the smaller the proportion of positive reactions. A single course of treatment does not seem to have much effect on the outcome of the test, but the general impression is all in favor of a thorough treatment in the first months and years after the infection.

W. Scholtz⁵ says that the Wassermann reaction is generally negative from the third to the sixth week after infection, and as a consequence it is only of slight value for early diagnosis.

Therapeutically the Wassermann test is of importance because it indicates that it is possible in a degree to cure syphilis by abortion, but the proof cannot be substantiated without further observation, extending over years.

Jesionek and Meirowsky⁶ say that we should bend every effort to change a positive to a negative reaction, because every syphilitic with a positive reaction is in danger of tabes and paralysis.

The earlier the treatment commences and the more energetically it is carried out the sooner will a positive

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